

THE THEORY OF
THEATRICAL DANCING

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THE THEORY OF THEATRICAL DANCING

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THE THEORY OF THEATRICAL DANCING

WITH A CHAPTER ON

PANTOMIME

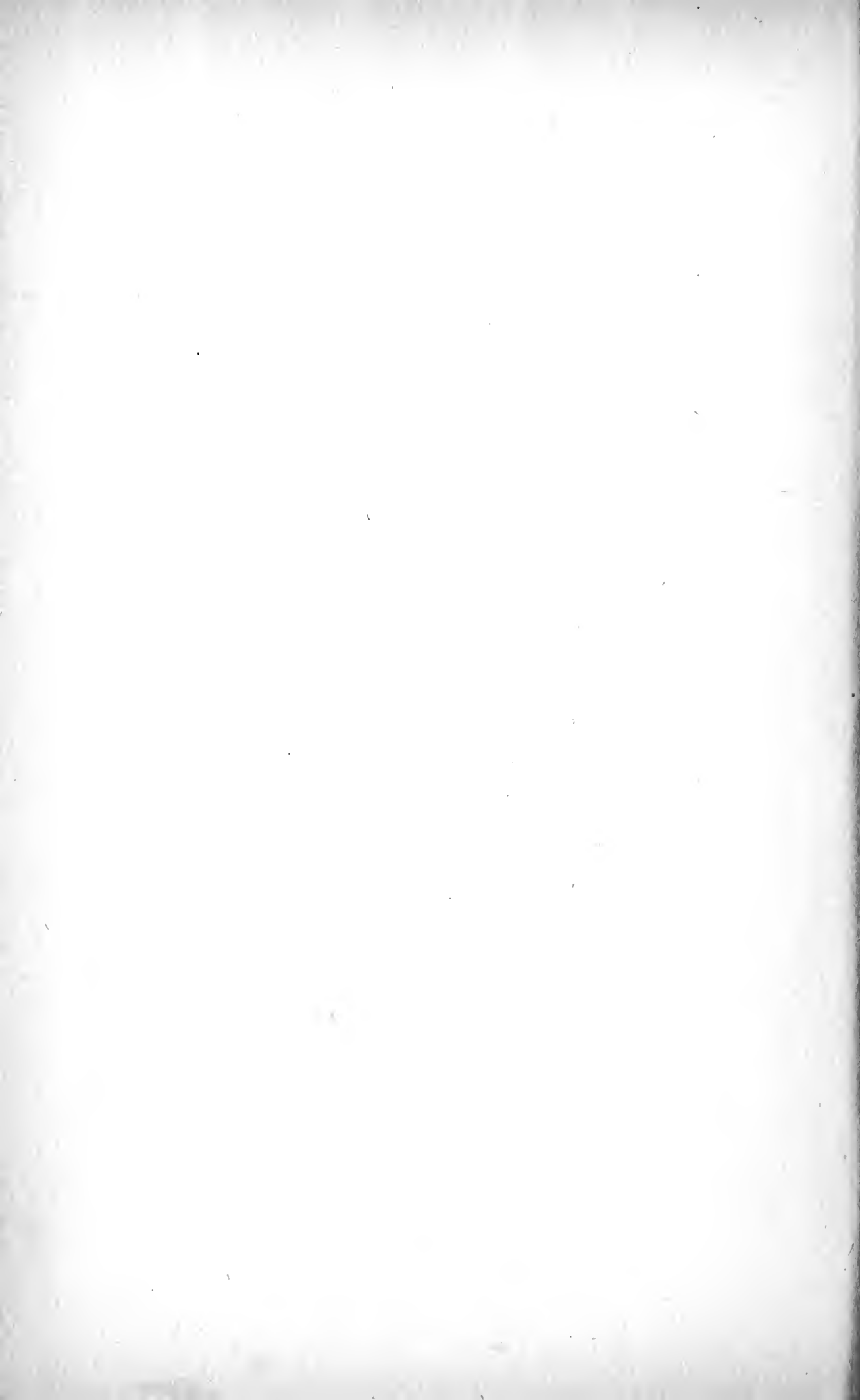
EDITED FROM CARLO BLASIS' CODE OF
TERPSICHORE, WITH THE ORIGINAL PLATES, BY
STEWART D. HEADLAM.

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FOR all the arts of mankind, and womankind, are only rightly learned or practised, when they are so with the definite purpose of pleasing or teaching others. A child dancing for its own delight, a lamb leaping, or a fawn at play, are happy and holy creatures ; but they are not artists. An artist is— and recollect this definition, A PERSON WHO HAS SUBMITTED TO A LAW WHICH IT WAS PAINFUL TO OBEY, THAT HE MAY BESTOW A DELIGHT WHICH IT IS GRACIOUS TO BESTOW.

JOHN RUSKIN.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.	PAGE.
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO PUPILS	1
CHAPTER II.	
STUDY OF THE LEGS	11
CHAPTER III.	
STUDY OF THE BODY	19
CHAPTER IV.	
STUDY OF THE ARMS	22
CHAPTER V.	
PRINCIPAL POSITIONS, WITH THEIR DERIVATIVES; PRE- PARATIONS AND TERMINATIONS; OF STEPS AND <i>Temps</i> ; POSES, ATTITUDES, ARABESQUES, GROUPS AND ATTITUDES <i>de genre</i>	28 to 33
ACTION OF THE HEAD	28
ATTITUDE	29
OF THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY IN A DANCER	29
COUNTERPOISE	29
OF THE FIGURE THAT MOVES AGAINST THE WIND	30
CHAPTER VI.	
OF <i>Temps</i> , STEPS, ENCHAINEMENTS AND OF THE ENTRECHAT	34
OBSERVATIONS ON THE ENTRECHAT, AND ON THE MANNER OF BEATING AND CROSSING IN CLOSE- LEGGED AND BOW-LEGGED DANCERS	36
CLOSE-LEGGED DANCERS	36
BOW-LEGGED DANCERS	36
OBSERVATIONS ON A PERSON IN THE ACT OF LEAPING FROM THE GROUND	37

CHAPTER VII.

PIROUETTES—OF THE MANNER IN WHICH A DANCER MUST PREPARE FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE PIROUETTES: OF THE VARIOUS POSITIONS SHE MAY TAKE IN TURNING, AND OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF STOPPING AND ENDING THEM	39
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CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE SERIOUS DANCER, THE DEMI-CHARACTERE, AND THE COMIC DANCER	46
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CHAPTER IX.

THE PRECEPTOR,—NEW METHOD OF INSTRUCTION ...	51
DIAGRAMS OF POSITION	55
OF THE COMPOSITION OF STEPS	56

CHAPTER X.

FIRST EXERCISE—FIRST POSITIONS	58
BATTEMENTS	58
RONDS DE JAMBES	60
OF THE TEMPS	61
OF THE PAS	61
OF THE LESSON	61
GAIT	62

CHAPTER XI.

ON PANTOMIME AND THE STUDIES NECESSARY FOR A PANTOMIMIC PERFORMER	64
ON THE ORIGIN OF THOSE MASKED CHARACTERS WHO PERFORM IN ITALIAN COMEDIES	85
EXPLANATION OF THE PLATES	90

PREFACE.

My chief object in producing this book is to enable the public to understand better than they do at present how difficult the art of Dancing is, and so to induce them to appreciate more fully the Dancers and their work. If, as Mr. Ruskin teaches, the artist is a person who has submitted to a law which it was painful to obey, in order to bestow a delight which it is gracious to bestow, the Dancers are artists indeed. And Dancing is an art, let the public remember, which depends on their immediate support for its very existence. The Poet, the Painter, the Sculptor can work for posterity: but the Dancer's art is fugitive, not permanent. If the contemporaries of any Dancer fail through ignorance, or dulness, or bigotry, to appreciate her, no one else can. They have prevented her God-given faculties from having the influence, which they were intended to have.

I hope also, that this book may be of some little use and encouragement to the Dancers themselves in their work. It will not, of course, teach them how to dance any more than it will teach the public and the critics

how to understand dancing: the Dancer can only learn her art from a living master and by constant practise; and I believe, also, that only one who has had practical experience of the art is capable of guiding and teaching the public to appreciate it thoroughly: but all the same, a careful study of this book, especially a constant comparison of the text with the Plates, will give the Dancer many useful hints, and will enable anyone who is a frequent spectator of Ballet Dancing to understand much more of the art than he otherwise would have done.

The THEORY OF THEATRICAL DANCING with the chapter on PANTOMIME form Parts II. and III. of CARLO BLASIS' most important work, "THE CODE OF TERPSICHORE," which, as he says, in his preface, was "conceived and executed in the heart of England," and was published in London in August, 1828, when the author was principal dancer at the King's Theatre (*i.e.* Her Majesty's). Carlo Blasis was then aged twenty-five, having been born at Naples on November 4th, 1803. He made his first appearance as a principal dancer at Marseilles, at the age of twelve, and his *debut* in Paris a few years after. While residing in Paris he took for his master and guide the celebrated Gardel, who selected for him as partner in his various performances,

the excellent and renowned *danseuse* of the opera, Mdle. Gosselin, and afterwards, Mdle. Le Gallois, an artist of classical taste. After leaving Paris, he danced in the principal cities in the north of France, and was then engaged at the La Scala, Milan, where he worked during fourteen seasons, subsequently visiting all the principal cities of Italy. After again performing in France, he came over to England in 1826, and was triumphantly received as Dancer, Actor, and Ballet composer. The Code of Terpsichore, which he published here, contains, besides the chapters on the theory of Theatrical Dancing and on Pantomime, a history of Dancing, an essay on Dramatic art as applied to Dancing, a collection of the author's Ballets in various styles, and some chapters on Private Dancing. The work contains also, besides the Plates which are here reproduced, some Ballet music, composed by his sisters, Virginia and Teresa Blasis, and the book is dedicated to Virginia, who was then Prima Donna of the Italian Opera at Paris. The English translation (on which this is founded) was made by "R. Barton, under the author's immediate inspection." The book was also published in France and Italy. After leaving England Blasis went to Naples, where at the San Carlo, while rehearsing a grand *pas de trois*

with Mesdames Brugnoti and Vaguemoulin, he met with an accident to his left leg: from this accident he never thoroughly recovered, and therefore determined "to leave the theatre before the theatre left him," and to devote himself entirely to the composition of Ballets and to "chorographic" art.

In 1837, Blasis and his wife were appointed to preside over the Imperial Academy of Dancing and Pantomime at Milan, and their school soon became the first of its kind. An interesting account of this school, (which was supported by the Government, and in which those young persons who were deemed qualified for the work by a Commission acting under Government received gratuitous instruction in Dancing and Pantomime) will be found in the second part of Carlo Blasis' notes upon Dancing, from which book these few facts about his life are taken.

During his long engagement at the Academy in Milan, Blasis and his wife—Annunziata Ramaccini—(of whose sister Guidetta's dancing as Juliet at Venice, Lord Byron said that it exhibited all the powerful feeling to be found in Shakespeare) paid frequent visits to England. In 1847 he was in England for the sixth time, and was engaged as composer of Ballets, first at Drury Lane and then at Covent Garden.

These few details as to his life and work are, I think, sufficient to prove that Carlo Blasis is well entitled to speak with authority on the Art of Dancing.

Of course, there are some to whom the art of Dancing offers no charms: superfine philosophers and very stern Puritans will have none of it: man delights them not, nor woman neither, and therefore, no wonder that from them the players get but Lenten entertainment. But the great mass of the people are, I am convinced, pleased and interested with beautiful Dancing, and will be glad to know and understand a little more about it: while those who go so far as to maintain that the human body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, will be enthusiastic supporters of the Dancers who, after much education and discipline, enable it to speak to us with the various poetry of vital motion.

If the study of this book enables only a few men and women to appreciate more fully and more reasonably a beautiful art; above all, if it gives any kind of encouragement to our English Dancers to take heart of grace and do the best for their art among the many difficulties with which they are surrounded, I shall be abundantly satisfied. The strain and stress of our modern competitive life, the failure of the State to carry out to the full

the education of the people in art as well as in other things, the absence of any regular school permanently connected with a Theatre or Opera, in which English Dancers can be trained, and so become secure, if they are competent, of a position and means of livelihood, naturally discourages and often absolutely prevents the English Dancers from giving that energy and time to Practise which is so entirely necessary for all who would be perfect in the art. But there are not wanting signs that wise laws and rational government will, before many generations are passed, alter this state of things. Let the dancers then do their best under the difficulties which surround them, and at any rate hand down to those better times the best traditions of the past.

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO THE CODE OF TERPSICHORE.

THE works hitherto published on the Art of Dancing, Ballets and Pantomime, are few in number, and, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, deficient in real merit and general utility. The subject has certainly been treated by Noverre in a masterly manner, considering the time when he wrote and the apparent intention of his labours; he threw many new and brilliant lights upon the art, but his letters were more adapted to instruct the professor, than to improve the pupil, even at the time of their publication, and the art has since advanced with such rapidity that his works are now of little use to either. The greater part of those who have written upon this subject seem to have been persons of taste, talent and learning; but they evidently were not dancers; so that, however attractive their productions may be to the general reader, the man of fashion, or the literary man, they are of little practical utility to the actor, the dancer or the Ballet-master. They contain a succession of theoretical and unconnected ideas, but do not develope any method of study and practice in all the various branches of the art. In fact, a practical work adapted to the present time, and calculated at once to assist the professor, to enlighten and amuse the amateur, and to instruct the student, appears for long to have been a desideratum. Impressed with the truth of these remarks, after several years of study, research and

practical experience, encouraged by many whose literary opinions he values most highly, and emboldened by the flattering reception which several of his works have met with in France, Italy and Spain, the author has resolved upon undertaking the composition of a large and comprehensive work, upon the origin, progress, theory and practice of dancing, including also treatises upon the composition and execution of *Ballets d'Action*, or Pantomimical Ballets. He has proposed and introduced improvements as he advances, and offered a new method of instruction which is more certain, as well as shorter, than anything hitherto known. He has endeavoured to give a greater latitude to Pantomime than has yet been allowed to that art, applying the rules and various styles of the regular drama to the chorographical composition. He has further attempted to demonstrate that Ballets should not be made mere *divertisements*, or dancing *spectacles*, and has restored his art to that place among the Fine Arts to which it may justly lay claim; for in fact all the passions of the human heart, the comic, the serious, the terrible, the ludicrous, may be perfectly expressed by a skilful Ballet-master, and an accomplished Pantomimic actor. The author has endeavoured to treat the subject in such a manner as to enlighten and instruct those who study and profess the art, and at the same time so as to interest persons of taste and learning and readers in general.

THEORY OF THEATRICAL DANCING.

*“ Que la danse toujours, ou gaie ou sérieuse,
Soit de nos sentimens l'image ingénieuse ;
Que tous ses mouvemens du cœur soient les échos
Les gestes un langage, et ses pas des tableaux ! ”*

DELILLE.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO PUPILS.

You who devote yourselves to the enchanting Terpsichore, and aspire to an honourable rank among her votaries ; who are gifted by nature with every quality necessary to obtain admission into her temples, and are predetermined to leave nothing undone that may help to lead you to perfection, attentively observe the following instructions:—

Success or failure in all studies chiefly depends on the manner in which they are commenced. Your first attention must therefore be directed to the choice of a master, with whom you may run no hazard of being led astray. All professors have not issued from good schools, and few have distinguished themselves in the art which they pretend to teach. Many there are of ordinary abilities who, far from increasing the number of good dancers, are daily diminishing it, and whose defective mode of instruction imparts a variety of vicious habits, which the pupil afterwards finds

extremely difficult, nay, sometimes impossible, to eradicate. You must not either follow the precepts of simple unpractised theorists, utterly incapable of demonstrating clearly the true principles of the art: nor be guided by the imaginary schemes of innovating speculators, who, whilst they think themselves contributing towards the advancement of the elementary rules of dancing are gradually working its destruction.

Carefully shun the baneful lessons of such preceptors, and seek to place yourself under the direction of an experienced master, whose knowledge and talents will serve as true guides to perfection, and point out the path that leads to pre-eminence.

In the first place I recommend you seriously to consider your personal qualifications and mental disposition for the art you attempt to learn. Can you be passionately fond of it? Can your chief delight be concentrated in its study and practice? Are you in most respects adapted to it? If in yourself you meet with a negative to these questions never expect to excel or even to become "tolerable" or "passable."

Do not allow yourself to be discouraged by difficulties. Every obstacle is surmounted by perseverance and reiterated practice. Remember the painter's advice to his pupils: "*Nulla dies sine linea.*" Nothing is of greater importance in dancing than frequent practice; to masters even it is necessary, to students indispensable. No other art demands a stricter attention in this particular: without it she who has made herself perfect cannot long remain so, she soon loses part of what has cost her so much labour to acquire, her equilibrium becomes less steady, her springs less

elastic, and she at length finds that through a remission of diligence she has much to do over again. This is not the case with music and singing; a good ear, a fine voice, are usually sufficient, with a few years of moderate study, to conquer all difficulties. Nor does painting require such intense application both from learners and professors as dancing, which, like all other bodily exercises, cannot be acquired and retained without the utmost study and assiduity. Do not therefore let twenty-four hours pass without practising. The pupil that frequently interrupts her studies opposes a considerable impediment to her progress. All the lessons that she takes, when widely separated one from the other, can be of no service towards making her a good dancer; and are little else than the loss of so much time which I would advise her to spend in a more profitable manner. Avoid, however, running into an opposite extreme, for too much practice is often as prejudicial as too little, Excess in everything is a fault: let me remind you of the philosopher's maxim: "*La moderation est le tresor du sage.*"

Be temperate and sober if you desire to become a finished dancer. To render yourself capable of sacrificing before the shrine of Terpsichore, partially renounce every pleasure but that which the goddess affords. Let no other exercise be intermingled with dancing: riding, fencing, running are all powerful enemies to the learner's advancement.

Do not rely on your own natural qualities in such a way as to neglect to study or practice as much as those to whom nature has been less liberal: for were you to possess the symmetry of the Apollo Belvedere,

the Antinous, or the Medicean Venus, together with the happiest endowments, you would have but little reason to expect to attain excellence in your profession without study, industry, and perseverance.

Particularly attend to the carriage of your body and arms. Let their motions be easy, graceful, and always in accordance with those of the legs. Display your form with taste and elegance, but beware of affectation. In the *lessons* and *exercises* pay an equal regard to both legs, lest the execution of the one surpass that of the other. I have seen many dance with one leg only; them I compare to painters that can draw figures but on one side. Dancers and painters of such limited talent are certainly not to be considered as good artists.

Take especial care to acquire perpendicularity and an exact equilibrium. In your performance be correct and very precise; in your steps brilliant and light; in every attitude natural and elegant. A good dancer ought always to be able to serve for a model to the sculptor and painter. This is perhaps the acme of perfection and the goal that all should endeavour to reach. Throw a sort of *abandon* into your positions, groups and *arabesques*: let your countenance be animated and expressive; *siano le attitudini degli uomini con le loro membra in tal modo disposte, che con quelle si dimostri l' intenzione del loro animo*. These words of the great Leonardo should be as deeply engraved in the memory of the actor and dancer as in that of the painter.

“Les gestes et les pas d’ un mutuel accord
Peignent (de l’ame) la meme ivresse et le meme transport.”

Dorat,

Be vigorous but avoid stiffness: seek to acquire a facility of spring, that your *entrechats* may be easy, precise, and well crossed. Rapidity is also very pleasing in a dancer; lightness still more so; the one imparts a brilliancy to the performance, the other has in it something of an aerial appearance that charms the eye of the spectator. Observe the *ballon*, nothing can be more delightful than to see you bounding with graceful elasticity in your steps, scarcely touching the ground, and seeming at every moment on the point of flying into the air.

Preserve a perfect equilibrium in the execution of your pirouettes, and be careful how you begin and end them. Tread with assurance and uprightness, holding your body and limbs as the following chapters will direct. Use your utmost endeavour to twirl delicately on the point of your toes; this is the most finished and agreeable style of execution; for what can be more unpleasing to the sight than a heavy, clumsy dancer, who twists about alternately on her heels and toes, and uncouthly jerks her body at each revolution of her pirouette?

Attentively study the invention of steps; try to vary incessantly your *enchaînements*, figures, attitudes and groups. "Variety" says Dauberval, "is one of the great charms of nature; nor can you please the beholder for any length of time, but in often changing your compositions."

Enchaînements in dancing are very numerous. Every good dancer has her own peculiar mode of combining her "phrases," steps, &c. Form therefore a style of your own, as originality is the chief means to procure yourself distinction. By copying

others you may, perhaps, sometimes excel, but the absence of novelty will, unquestionably, deprive your dancing of all attraction.

“ Il en est de la danse comme de la musique et des danseurs comme des musicien : nôtre art n'est pas plus riche en pas fondamentaux que la musique l'est en notes ; mais nous avons des octaves, des rondes, des blanches, des noires, des croches, des temps à compter, et une mesure à suivre ; ce mélange d'un petit nombre des pas et d'une petite quantité de notes offre une multitude d'enchainements et de traits variés : le goût et le génie trouvent toujours une source de nouveautés en arrangeant et en retournant, cette petite portion de notes et de pas de mille sens et de mille manières différentes : ce sont donc ces pas lent et soutenus, ces pas vifs, précipités ; et ces temps plus ou moins ouverts, que forment cette diversité continuelle.”

Imitate the art of painting in your manner of combining and arranging : let all the parts of your picture be in strict harmony with one another, the principal effect spirited, every tint (if the expression may be allowed in speaking of the modulation of steps, attitudes, &c.) flowing easily into the next, and the whole finished off with softness and taste. Keep a vigilant ear on the movements, rests and cadences of the music, that your dancing may be in exact concert with its accompaniment. Everything depends on this melodious union, and when really perfect it is charming in the extreme. Not an eye can follow the performer without delight, not an ear, however unsusceptible of the impressions which music conveys, can listen without being worked upon by a combination so harmonious and ravishing.

Observe with attention and judiciously examine all that concerns your art. Maturely weigh all advice that is offered to you, and afterwards make use of it as your judgment best directs. Do not disdain even to learn from an inferior. A bad dancer may at times have in her style of dancing something good that previously escaped your notice. A middling figurante, or even one utterly devoid of taste, will be able now and then to give you salutary counsel.

Do not shrink from rendering yourself importunate by constantly questioning your teacher: reason freely with him upon the art you are acquiring: if you fall into error, blush not to confess your mistake in consulting him, but in every respect profit by his opinions, follow his directions, and put his precepts into immediate practice, that they may be thereby more firmly rooted in your memory.

Never depart from true principles, nor cease to follow the best guides. Above all, do not permit yourself to be led astray by the example of some miserable performers, who enjoy for a while the applause of an ill-discerning public, by feats of strength, gambols and ridiculous pirouettes. Be assured that the laurels of such pitiful performers are seldom lasting.

The approbation of men of distinction in the art, the only judges to be esteemed and consulted, is ever a sufficient stimulus to a dancer of talent, who cannot but entertain a profound contempt for that praise which fools lavish on every mountebank they behold.

Ease and softness in the execution of your dance, I repeat, ought always to be aimed at. In acquiring these, you show that the exercise is natural to you,

and that you have overcome the greatest difficulty, namely, the concealment of art.

When once possessed of this great quality, which I may term the highest step on the ladder of perfection, you may claim every suffrage, and justly merit the name of a finished dancer.

Consider carefully what style of dancing suits you best. Nothing exhibits a greater want of taste in a dancer than the choice of a style not at all adapted to her powers. Can anything be more ridiculous than the appearance of a tall majestic performer, fit, in every respect, to pursue the serious branch of her art, dancing a *pas villageois* in a little comic ballet. And on the other hand can anything be more ludicrous than to see a thick-set dancer of a diminutive stature, come forward robed in heroic garment and gravely figure off in slow and mournful *adagio*. The ancients have, by the purity of their taste in this respect, set us an example of severity towards performers of this stamp, of which the following anecdote is an illustration:—"A certain actor, very short in person, was representing Hector, in a play performed at Antioch. The people, beholding the hero thus transformed into a dwarf, simultaneously exclaimed, "*Astyanactum videmus, ubi Hector est?*" We see Astyanactus before us, but where is Hector?" Both the dancer and the actor should consider their figure and physical powers, before they adopt any particular style of dancing or performance, that they may only assume the character which they are framed by nature to represent.

The union of several branches of the art in one person is blameable; especially in the case of certain second-rate dancers, who, by their endeavours to ape

the highest favourites of Terpsichore seem bent on bringing her enchanting art to degradation. But those who are neither very tall nor very short, and are endowed with the requisite ability, may exert themselves in every kind; by diligent study and practice they may even shine in whatever part they take. Not so with a dancer of high stature: let her exclusively adopt the serious and heroic kind. Nor with one below the middle size; let hers be the pastoral and *demi-caractère*. You must always vary your style of dancing with your dress; it would be a vicious taste to make it the same in an Ancient Greek or Roman costume as in a modern villager's dress. Men of the most illustrious genius, whether poets, painters, or musicians, have ever carefully avoided confounding the character and expression of their different personages and styles. Distinction has always been their study; follow their example; such an imitation on your part will show a sound judgment, and powerfully assist you in your progress to perfection.

The music of a dance or ballet must be livelier and of a stronger accent and cadence than vocal music; and as it is required to significantly accompany a great variety of sentiments and attitudes, it ought also to be much more diversified. It is music alone which can inspire the dancer and actor with that warmth of expression which a singer derives from words. Music supplies in the language of the soul, all that dancing, by its attitudes and gestures, cannot make known to the spectator.

An anonymous author, speaking of music and dancing says: "Ces deux arts sont frères, et se tiennent par la main; les accens lentres et har-

monieux de l'un excitent les mouvements agréables et expressifs de l'autre ; leurs effets réunis offrent aux yeux et aux oreilles des tableaux animés ; ces sont portent au cœur les images intéressantes qui les ont affectés ; le cœur les communique à l'âme ; et le plaisir qui résulte de l'harmonie et de l'intelligence des ces deux arts enchaîne le spectateur, et lui fait éprouver ce que la volupté a de plus séduisant."

Pantomime, unquestionably, expresses a great deal, but without the accents of musical sounds, melodiously conveying their appropriate sentiments, it never can entirely stir the soul.

I shall conclude this chapter by recommending to your attention the study of drawing and music, as almost indispensable to make a perfect dancer. By drawing you acquire better ideas of symmetry, elegance, and gracefulness, especially if you pursue the *beau idéal* which is the aim of this art. Music enables you to be more precise in your performance, your ears to be more awake to the time and cadence of the accompaniment, and all your movements to be made in strict accord with the rhythm of the tune. Music and drawing will afford you much facility in composition also, as whatever be your genius and creative powers of imagination, one thing is certain, your productions cannot easily fail of being correct.

CHAPTER II.

STUDY OF THE LEGS.

IN order to manage your legs properly, endeavour chiefly to acquire a facility of turning them out completely. To this end, make yourself easy about your hips, that your thighs may move with freedom and your knees turn well outwards: all the outward movements of your legs are thus rendered easy and graceful. By dint of practice and attention you will be able to accomplish this without any painful efforts.

A dancer whose hips are much contracted, and whose legs cannot turn entirely out, is never esteemed; as by these defects the performance is deprived of its greatest charm. But one that is gifted with freedom and pliancy, that exhibits a foot well attached to the instep, the point of which is strong, elastic and low, has a very delightful appearance.

Some young people are framed by nature with their limbs turning outwards: they possess therefore more facility, and succeed to greater advantage than those whose legs turn towards each other; a person of the latter kind indeed can cherish no hopes of becoming a good dancer, how diligent soever her labour and study may be. Practice will do no more than turn her feet, or bend her soles a little downwards, but her thighs and knees will remain always in their natural state.

Here we perceive how requisite it is that all who intend devoting themselves to the study of dancing, should scrupulously examine the make and faculties of their body before they begin to learn an art in which it is impossible to succeed without several gifts of nature.

Be attentive, in practising, to the movements and position of your insteps; do not let them relax in strength and elasticity, nor suffer one of your ankles to be higher than the other; to relax the insteps would be a very serious defect; make your insteps as high and graceful as possible, and give them sufficient strength for the execution of rapid, vigorous and elevated movements. The action of the instep principally consists in raising and letting down the heel. Study above all things to make it easy and strong, as the equilibrium of the whole body depends upon it. When you spring upwards the instep supports the whole weight of the body on coming down, and by a strong rapid movement makes you alight on your toes.

The movement of the knee is inseparable from that of the instep, and differs from it but in being perfect only when the leg is extended and the point of the foot low. The movement of the hip is a sort of guide to that of the knee and instep, as it is impossible for these last to move unless the hip acts first. In some steps the hips alone are set in motion as in *entrechats*, *battements tendus*, &c.

Dancers who have not a natural elasticity, or whose calves are weak in muscle, are compelled to have recourse to their insteps, and this makes amends in a great measure for the debility of other parts, but not

without an immense deal of practice. Daily exercise gives them also vigour and rapidity, but let them beware of interrupting their practice if they wish to get any good from it.

Let the bending of your knee be easy, precise and elegant. Many dancers imagine that nothing further is required to be supple and soft, than to bend their knee very low; but this is a great error, as too low a bend makes the dance appear dry and insipid. You may be wanting in ease and buoyancy no less by bending too much than by not bending at all. The reason is obvious, if we consider how subordinate every motion in dancing is to music. For when the bend is too low, and a longer time is taken for every bend than the music allows, you are obliged to make a sudden spring or rather jerk, to regain the time which you have for a few instants lost, and this rapid transition from flexion to tension is extremely harsh, and produces an effect equally as disagreeable to the spectator as that which results from stiffness.

What may be called a soft mellowness in dancing depends in a great degree on a proportionate flexion of the knees; but the instep must contribute, by its elasticity, to the gracefulness of the movement, and the loins serve as a kind of counterpoise to the bending, that the spring when the instep rises and falls may be soft and elegant and the whole may be in perfect accord and harmony.

Let all your openings resulting from the bending of the knee, be consistent with this principle, and in their design strictly uniform with the position of your body and arms.

If your body is very long, try to raise your legs

higher than common rules prescribe; if very short keep them lower than the usual height. By this means you conceal the defect that exists in the construction of your body.

In your steps and *temps* of vigour be energetic and strong, but at the same time beware lest these qualities degenerate into faults, by stiffness and a painful tension of the muscles.

As there are many persons so formed that their legs are closely joined to each other, and on the contrary a great number naturally bow-legged, I shall here point out the means of remedying, or at least of hiding these two defects.

A person is close-legged when the hips and thighs are firmly contracted, the knees thick and apparently joined together, and the lower part of the legs, that is to say, from the bottom of the calf to the heels, form a triangle, of which the ground is the base; the inside ankles are very large, the instep high, and the *tendon achilles* thin, long, and but faintly marked. (See Plate iii., figure 5.)

The bow-legged person is one in whom the opposite defect is conspicuous. The thighs are too much divided, the knees very distant from each other, the calves do not join, and the light that should be perceived only in certain parts, is seen throughout the whole length of the legs, which are, therefore, in appearance very similar to two bows, whose extremities are turned to each other. Persons of this description have a long flat foot, their exterior ankles stick out, and the *tendon achilles* is thick and too close to the joints. (See Plate iii., figure 4.)

These two natural defects, so diametrically opposite,

prove how much the rules of instruction must vary according to the peculiar make of a pupil, as those that are fit for the one to pursue, are prejudicial in the extreme to the other. The studies therefore of two dancers so different in point of shape cannot in any manner be the same.

The close-legged dancer must endeavour as much as possible to separate the parts that are too nearly united. To succeed in these attempts, let her in the first place, turn her thighs outwards and move them in this position, which she is enabled to do by the freedom of the rotatory movement of the *os femoris* in the *cotyloid* cavity of the hip bones. The knees assisted by this movement will follow the same direction, and at length get into their right place. The *rotula*, which hinders the knee from bending backwards, will then fall perpendicularly in the line of the point of the foot; and the thighs and legs at length become perfectly straight, and firmly maintain the stability of the trunk. In the second place, she ought to keep a continued flexion in the joint of her knees, and so make her legs appear more extended than they are in reality. This is the work of time and practice. Having once acquired the habit it will almost be impossible to make the legs return to their primitive vicious position, without the most painful and insufferable efforts.

The bow-legged dancer must also try to diminish her bow-leggedness by drawing her legs as close as possible to each other. It is requisite to her as to the close-legged one to practise moving the thighs outwards. She should moreover keep her knees in constant extension, that they may thereby acquire

pliancy and softness, and thus conceal her natural stiffness; yet a dancer of this kind can never succeed in the heroic branch, she should therefore devote herself to the *demi-caractère*, or, perhaps, rather undertake the pastoral and study its characteristic steps.

The close-legged dancer is tolerably well adapted to the serious dance and the dance *demi-caractère* and is in general far more useful than the preceding. Her execution is easier, her movements more delicate, natural, and graceful; but as she seldom possesses the same strength as the former, she is often compelled to have recourse to the assistance of her instep. In the performance of *entrechats* she may not be brilliant, but she can be always correct and elegant. Such a dancer may even sometimes aspire to perfection in every branch, provided the height of her stature throws no impediment in the way.

A close-legged dancer should preserve a gentle flexibility in her execution, and never extend her knees, excepting at the termination of openings, steps, attitudes, &c., by this means she conceals her natural closeness. A bow-legged dancer must, on the contrary, be stretched out as stiff as possible, always avoiding hardness, to which such a mode of performance naturally tends, and cross her legs very closely, so that their union may decrease, in a great measure, the interval that would otherwise exist between them. But notwithstanding all her efforts, she has not the same chance of success as the close legged performer; she is usually very strong and vigorous, her muscles are therefore less pliable and her joints cannot act with much freedom or ease. Let it be also remem-

bered, that if this defect of *bow-leggedness* proceeds from the natural construction of the bones, every attempt to remedy or amend it must prove fruitless. Art is then of no avail.

POSITIONS IN DANCING.

First position, figure 1, Plate i.

Second position, figure 2, Plate ii.

Second position on the toes, figure 3, Plate ii.

Third position, figure 3, Plate i.

Fourth position, (side view) figure 1, Plate ii.

Fifth position, figure 4, Plate i.

Fifth position on the toes, figure 5, Plate i.

N.B. In the second position the distance between the two heels is the length of the foot. In the third position the feet must be only half crossed.

Bending in the first position, figure 4, Plate ii.

N.B. The position, on the toes of the first, third and fourth position, and in bending in all except the first, are omitted in order not unnecessarily to increase the number of the Plates; these positions are very easily understood and can be executed without the assistance of Plates.

Method of holding oneself in practising, figure 5, Plate ii.

Physical construction of the close-legged pupil, figure 5, Plate iii.

Physical construction of the bow-legged pupil, figure 4, Plate iii.

N.B. The delineator has somewhat exaggerated the lines of these figures for the purpose of better exhibiting to the pupil those defective constructions.

A dancer at the second position in the air and on the heel, figure 5, Plate ii.

A dancer at the second position, in the air and on the toes, figure 1, Plate vi.

A dancer at the second position in the air and holding out the foot pointed (side view), figure 1, Plate iv.

A dancer at the fourth position on the toes in the air holding out the foot pointed, (front view) figure 2, Plate iv.

A dancer at the fourth position in the air holding out the foot pointed behind, figure 3, Plate iv.

Position of the legs in *poses* and different attitude. Plates v., vi., vii., viii., ix.

Position of the legs in arabesques, Plates x., xi., xii,

N.B. In arabesques, and several other attitudes, the feet must not be entirely turned ; if they were, these positions would lose their gracefulness.

CHAPTER III.

STUDY OF THE BODY.

YOUR body should be, as a rule, erect and upright on your legs, except in certain attitudes, and especially in the *arabesques*, when it must lean forwards or backwards according to the position you adopt. You should always be careful to keep it equally poised upon your thighs. Throw your chest out and hold your waist in as much as you can. In your performance preserve continually a gentle bend, and much firmness about the loins. Let your shoulders be low, your head high, your countenance animated and expressive.

A dancer who wishes to charm the beholder's eye must show all the elegance that her fancy can inspire her with, in the carriage of her body, the easy display of her limbs, and the gracefulness of every attitude into which she throws herself. But let no affectation intermingle with your dancing; that would mar everything. By due attention to these particulars, you will make each of your accomplishments shine forth to their greatest advantage, and always be rewarded for the labour you have taken.

The elegance of the upper part of the body is specially to be attended to by a dancer, as in that, one of her principal merits consists. Carry your bust gracefully, impart to its motions and oppositions a

certain *abandon*, and do not let it lose in any way the beauty of its pose or the purity of its design.

Your head, shoulders, and bust, ought to be supported and encircled by your arms, and so precisely follow their motions, that they may present altogether a graceful *ensemble*; and as we have already remarked, the legs must, of course, participate in the harmony of these movements.

In the performance of your steps let your body be quiet, firm and unshaken, yet easy and pliant, following the play of the legs and arms. But especially beware of stiffness. She who, whilst dancing, moves her body by jerks, raises her shoulders at each movement of her legs—bends or relaxes her loins to facilitate the executions of her *temps*, and who shews by the distortion of her features, how much pain her performance occasions her, is, unquestionably, an object of ridicule, and the name of a *grotesque* would suit her much better than the name of a dancer.

I have repeatedly seen examples of this defective mode of dancing; and cannot but attribute it principally to the negligence of masters, who, over-anxious to see their pupils exhibit on a public stage leave them to themselves before they have completed their studies. The public too, by their too indulgent applause or their want of taste, considerably increase the number of this class of dancers, or more properly speaking, leapers, who, finding themselves so much encouraged, immediately imagine that they have attained the summit of perfection in their art.

——le vulgaire s'extasie

Aux tours de force aux entrechats.

L'Hospital.

Such miserable dancers ought to be banished from the boards of every theatre, as mountebanks possessed of no gift save that of diffusing bad taste.

Simple position of the body, figure 1, Plate i.

Epaulement, opposition of the body, figures 3 and 4, Plate i.

Position of the body in *poses* and different attitudes Plates v. vi. vii. viii. ix.

Position of the body in arabesques Plates x. xi. xii.

N.B. In arabesques the body goes out of a perpendicular line and inclines forwards or backwards in a pleasing *abandon*.

CHAPTER IV.

STUDY OF THE ARMS.

THE position, opposition and carriage of the arms are, perhaps, the three most difficult things in dancing, and, therefore, demand particular study and attention.

Noverre, speaking of opposition, says, that “of all the movements executed in dancing, the opposition or contrast of the arms to the feet, is the most natural and at the same time, the least attended to. Observe, for instance, a number of persons walking, you will see that when they place the right foot forward the left arm naturally falls forward also, and is thus in opposition with it. This appears to me a general rule, and from thence it is that skilful dancers have acquired the true manner of carrying their arms and keeping them in a constant opposition to the feet, that is to say, that when the left arm is behind, the left leg must be before.”

Noverre does not, in my opinion, treat of the opposition with that clearness and exactness which the subject requires; indeed, few writers have done so. The obscurity therefore, that has existed on this important matter in dancing, has occasioned it to be an object of continual controversy among professional dancers.

Let us endeavour to elucidate it a little. The opposition of one part of a moving solid to another part is a

law of equilibrium by which the gravitating powers are divided. This is precisely what Noverre wishes to demonstrate in his example of the gait of a man. And when he further says that opposition takes place each time that the man or dancer puts one leg forward, he means to point out that if such foot so placed before be the right, the left arm must naturally be carried forward at the same instant, whilst the opposite limbs remain behind; the whole counterpoising the deviation of the body from the central line of gravity. This opposition gives the dancer a very graceful appearance, as she thereby avoids that uniformity of lines in her person so unbecoming a true favourite of Terpsichore.

For examples of opposition see figure 3, Plate i., figure 4, Plate iv., and all the figures of Plate viii.

There are two methods of moving the wrists—upwards and downwards. When the movement is to be made downwards, the wrist must be bent inwards, the hand moving in a half circle, and returning to its first position; but care must be taken not to bend the wrist too violently for it would then appear as if broken. With respect to the second movement, which is upwards, the wrist must be bent in a rounded position allowing the hand to turn upwards, in making a half turn; by this movement the hand will be found in the first position in agreement with the arms.

The elbow, as well as the wrist, has its movement downwards and upwards, with this difference, that when you bend the elbows, the wrists are bent also, which prevents the arms from appearing stiff, imparting to them much grace. Still it is not necessary to bend the wrists much, as that would produce an

extravagant effect, the same thing may be observed of the legs when the knee is bent, it is then the instep that completes the movement, by raising the foot in the same manner as the wrist and elbow.

Thus in order to move them downwards, the arms being placed high, the elbow and wrist must be bent, and when the arms are bent also, they must be extended in order to complete the movement. They will then return to the first position in which they were at the beginning. When you perform a movement with the wrists, they should be bent and then straightened in the same manner as when they are accompanied by the movements of the elbows.

As to the second movement, which is upwards, the hands being down, the wrists and elbows must be bent, forming a circle, taking care that both arms form at the same time a motion exactly similar ; and then return to their first position.

A dancer who holds and moves her arms in a graceful manner, and according to the true rules of art, shows that she has studied in a good school, and her performance is invariably correct. Few artists distinguish themselves by a good style of action with their arms ; which deficiency generally proceeds from the mediocrity of the principles they receive from bad teaching, or else it originates in their own negligence, believing, as I have known many do, that if they possess a brilliant mode of execution with their legs, they can do very well without the fine additional ornament of the arms ; and thus they exempt themselves from the labour which so important a study requires.

When the arms accompany each movement of the

body with exactitude, they may be compared to the frame that sets off a picture. But if the frame is so constructed as not to suit the painting, however well done the latter may be, much of its effect is unquestionably lost. Even so it is with a dancer; for what gracefulness soever she may display in the performance of her steps, unless her arms be lithsome, and in strict harmony with her legs, her dance can have no spirit nor liveliness; and she presents the same insipid appearance as a painting out of its frame, or in one not at all adapted to it.

Should you not be favoured with well made rounded arms, you cannot bestow too much attention on them, endeavouring to supply by art what nature has left you defective in. Diligent study and exercise often render a thin, long, angular arm, tolerably round and elegant.

Learn also to hold your arms as best accords with your physical construction. If you are short in stature let them be higher than the general rule prescribes, and if tall let them be lower. A good dancer should omit nothing that may tend to remedy or conceal her personal defects. It is one of those necessary accomplishments to which the mind of every one who desires to become a skilful artist ought to be directed.

Take care to make your arms so encircling that the points of your elbows may be imperceptible. From a want of proper attention in this respect they are deprived of all softness and elegance, and instead of presenting to the eye rounded and graceful outlines, (see figures 1, 4, 5, Plate i.) they exhibit nothing but a series of angles destitute of taste and graceful-

ness (see figures 1, 2, 3, Plate iii.) unpleasing to the spectator, and imparting to all your attitudes a grotesque and caricature-like appearance which make you only an object of ridicule to the painter.

Let the point of junction of the shoulder-bone with the lower bone of the arm be level with the palm of your hand, your shoulders low and always motionless, your elbows round and well supported, and your fingers gracefully grouped together. The position and carriage of your arms must be soft and easy. Let them make no extravagant movement, nor permit the least stiffness to creep into their motions. Beware lest they be jerked by the action and reaction of your legs: this is a great fault and sufficient to spoil a dancer, what perfection soever she may possess in the exercise of her legs.

Simple position of the arms, figure 1, Plate i.

Position of the wrist and fingers, figure 2, Plate i.

Arms in the second position, figure 1, Plate i.

Arms in opposition, figure 4, Plate i.

Arms encircling above the head, figure 5, Plate i.

Half-arm, or *Demi bras*, figure 2, Plate ii.

Opposition of the *Demi bras*, figure 3, Plate i.

Position of the arms in various attitudes, Plates
v., vi., vii., viii., ix.

Position of the arms in arabesques, Plates x.,
xi., xii.

N.B. It must be observed that in arabesques the position of the arms deviates from the general rule;

it must, therefore, be left to the good taste of the dancer, who must arrange them as gracefully as possible.

Position of the hands in different attitudes and arabesques, figure 5, Plate v.

Defective positions of the arms, figures 1, 2, 3, Plate iii.

CHAPTER V.

PRINCIPAL POSITIONS WITH THEIR DERIVATIVES,
PREPARATIONS AND TERMINATIONS OF STEPS AND *Temps* ;
POSES ; ATTITUDES, ARABESQUES, GROUPS AND
ATTITUDES *De Genre*.

ALWAYS keep your body well up, and especially your head, even in the least emphasized poses (see Plate v.) : if not, your performance will be void of expression, and your position or attitude become insipid. In some of the first positions of dancing the head is placed fronting ; these are *poses* of attitude.

Action of the Head.

Never let your head rest perpendicularly upon your shoulders, but incline it a little to the right or to the left, whether your eyes are cast up or downwards or straight forwards ; as it is essential that it should have a pleasing yet natural vivacity of motion, and not appear inactive and heavy.

Endeavour to hold your body in a perfect equilibrium ; to which end never let your limbs depart from the perpendicular line that should fall from the centre of the collar bone down between the ankles of the two feet. (See figures 4 and 5, Plate i. ; figure 5, Plate ii. ; figure 1, Plate iv. ; figures 1, 2, 3, 4, Plate v. ; figure 4, Plate vii. ; *see also* chapter iii.)

Attitude.

The pit of the neck must correspond perpendicularly with the feet; if you move one leg forwards the pit then goes back out of its perpendicularity with the foot, if backwards it is thrown to the front and thus changes its place with every variation of position.

Besides a graceful carriage let the dancer acquire uprightness: in forming an exact counterpoise with every part of her frame, she will thus enable herself to support her body on one leg and also to obtain an elegant style of attitude upon both. (See Plates viii., x., xi., xii.)

Of the centre of gravity in a dancer.

The weight of a man standing on one leg is divided in an equal manner on the point that sustains the whole, (see figure 1, Plate x.,) and as he moves, the central line of gravity passes exactly through the middle of the leg that rests wholly on the ground. (See figure 1, Plate viii.)

Counterpoise.

A person that carries a burden placed out of the central line of her body, must necessarily add from her own weight, a balance sufficient to counter-balance it on the opposite side, and thus form a true equilibrium round the centre of gravity. (See figure 2, Plate viii.) But in certain attitudes which the dancer throws herself into as she springs from the ground, as also in inclined arabesques such as that in figure 3, Plate xi., the central line of gravity is not placed in the same manner as it is in the figures of the Plates i., ii., iii., iv. See also figure 1, Plate ix., figure 1, Plate x., as relating to this remark.

Of the figure that moves against the wind.

A dancer that goes against the wind, in whatever direction it may be, ought to preserve with exactitude the centre of gravity of the line that supports her. See figures 2, 4, and 5, seen from different sides, Plate xiv. See also figures 1, 2, 3, Plate xiv., and figure 4, same Plate, which represents a Bacchanalian group which I composed during the first year that I was engaged at the theatre La Scala at Milan.

That peculiar position technically termed *attitude* is the most elegant but at the same time the most difficult which dancing comprises. It is, in my opinion, a kind of imitation of the attitude so much admired in the Mercury of John of Bologna. See figures 1 and 2, Plate viii., which exhibit two side views of it; see also figure 1, Plate ix., representing the statue of Mercury. A dancer that studies this attitude and performs it well, is sure to be noticed as one who has acquired the best notions of her art. Nothing can be more agreeable to the eye than those charming positions which we call *arabesques* and which we have derived from antique basso relievos, from a few fragments of Greek paintings, and from the paintings in fresco at the Vatican, executed after the beautiful designs of Raphael.

Arabica ornamenta, as a term in painting, means those ornaments composed of plants, shrubs, light branches and flowers, with which the artist adorns pictures, panels, friezes, &c. As a term in architecture, arabesque signifies various fanciful foliages, stalks, &c., with which pediments and entablature are often embellished. The taste for this sort of ornament was

brought to us by the Moors and Arabs from whom the name is taken. Our dancing masters have also introduced the term into their art, as expressive of the picturesque groups which they have formed of male and female dancers, interlaced in a thousand different manners one with another, by means of garlands, crowns, hoops entwined with flowers, and sometimes ancient pastoral instruments which they hold in their hands. These attitudes, so delightful and enchanting, remind us of the beautiful Bacchantes that we see on antique basso relievos, and by their aerial lightness, their variety, their liveliness, and the numberless contrasts they successively present, have in a manner rendered the word arabesque natural and proper to the art of dancing. I may flatter myself on being the first to give the precise meaning to this expression as applied to our art, without which explanation it might afford a motive for derision to painters and architects to whom it originally and exclusively belonged.

Dancers should learn from these chaste pieces of sculpture and painting the real mode of displaying themselves with taste and gracefulness. They are a fount of beauty whereto all who aspire to distinction must resort for purity and correctness of design. In the Bacchanalian group above mentioned I introduced with some success various attitudes, arabesques and groups, the ideas of which I had conceived on seeing the paintings, bronzes and marbles excavated from the ruins of Herculaneum, and by these additional images rendered its appearance more picturesque, characteristic and animated (see figure 4, Plate xiv., the principal group). Those precious monuments of

ancient skill have been repeatedly pronounced the best models for the painter and sculptor; in my opinion they are of equal service to the dancer.

Poses, preparations, and endings of steps and *temps*, figure 4, Plate iv., figures 1, 2, 3 & 4, Plate v.

N.B. Enchaînements and steps may be also finished in attitudes and arabesques.

Different attitudes, Plates vi. & vii.

Attitude as technically so denominated, figure 1, Plate viii.

The same, side view, figure 2, Plate viii.

Different ways of resting in attitudes, figures 3 & 4, Plate viii.

Derivatives of the attitude, figures 2 & 3, Plate ix.

Example of the attitude of the Mercury of John of Bologna.

Arabesques Plates x., xi., xii.

Arabesques, on both legs, figure 4, Plate vii.

Arabesques, back view, figures 3 & 4, Plate xi., figure 4, Plate vii.

Groups, attitude de genre, Plate xiv.

N.B. I have left out several attitudes and arabesques upon one foot resting flat on the ground, and the same arabesques upon two feet, which are done by merely putting down the leg that is in the air, as represented in figure 4, Plate vii., which is derived from the arabesque shown in figure 4, Plate xi.

Attitudes, poses and arabesques, may be varied *ad infinitum*, for the slightest change in the situation of the body, in the opposition of the arms, or the motions of the legs, when all is happily combined, must

produce an immense diversity. It is the good taste of the dancer that must decide on the best manner of combining and changing them, taking especial care to make them appropriate to the style and character of her dancing. These modified attitudes are most practised in the *enchaînements* of groups, similar to those presented in figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Plate xiv.

CHAPTER VI.

OF *Temps*, STEPS, *Enchaînements* AND OF THE
Entrechat.

LET your *grands temps* be wide, bold and easy : perform them with preciseness ; in ending them be upright and firm on your legs. In all your *terre-à-terre* steps you cannot be too active about the instep, nor bend your feet too much downwards ; as the former gives your execution considerable brilliancy, and the latter renders it light and graceful.

A truly good dancer ought to throw a sort of light and shade into her steps, and by great exactness of performance, distinctly mark each variation she makes in them. In all your elevations develop a sinewy strength, and let your steps of elevation contrast agreeably with the rapidity of your *terre-à-terre* steps. Do not, however, forget to regulate your choice of steps according to the kind of dancing you have adopted, as also according to your physical construction.

In your *enchaînements*, let variety and novelty be your constant aim ; carefully study their composition, and do all that your taste points out, to make yourself agreeable. Never intermingle with them any elevated steps, or steps that require much strength to perform, and beware lest you relax into coolness by too long pauses, as the one or the other of

these faults would unavoidably destroy all the effects which *enchaînements* produce, when correctly executed to a quick and lively music.

The *entrechat* is a light brilliant step, during the performance of which, the dancer's legs rapidly cross each other, and then come down again in the fifth position or attitude upon one leg, as in the *entrechat à cinq*, *à sept*, *à neuf*, the *cabriole*, *brisés* and the *ronde-de-jambe en l'air*; all these steps, ending thus on one leg, may also finish in any of the attitudes and *arabesques* pointed out in the plates referred to at the close of the foregoing chapter. *Entrechats* are generally begun with an *assemblée*, *coupé* or *jetté*: the body then springs into the air, and the legs pass to the fifth position to cross and cut.

In *entrechats* you may cut four, six, eight, ten, and even twelve times if you possess the requisite strength. Some can go as far as fourteen, but such efforts have a disagreeable effect, and occasion nothing more in the beholder, than wonder at the extraordinary muscular powers of the leaper. When a dancer endeavours to make too great a number of cuts, she cannot finish her *entrechat* in time, and her body, shaken by such rapid movements, writhes in a variety of contortions, that offend the eye of the spectator. The most elegant *entrechats* are *entrechat à six* and the *entrechat à six ouvert* done by opening at the third cut (see Plate xii., figure 4,) and the *entrechat à huit*. The following different *entrechats* may be done in turning: *entrechat à cinq dessus*; *entrechat à cinq dessous*; *brisé de côté dessus et dessous*; *en arrière et en avant*; *entrechat à cinq de côté et en arrière*; *sissonne battue en avant et sissonne battue derriere*; *entrechat à*

quatre sur une jambe; entrechat à sept en avant et en arrière; la cabriole à un et à deux temps; la cabriole Italienne en avant et en arrière; les deux ronde des jambes en dehors et en dedans, &c., excepting the *entrechat à cinq de cote et en arrière*, the *entrechat à sept en avant* and the *cabriole*. The *entrechat à six* may be done in turning.

Observations on the Entrechat and on the manner of beating and crossing in close-legged and bow-legged dancers.

In the case of close-legged dancers.

The contraction of the muscles, occasioned by the efforts of leaping, stiffens each joint, and forces every part back into its natural place. The knees thus compelled to turn inwards, regain their primitive thickness, which greatly hinders the beatings of the *entrechat*. The more united are the legs at these upper parts, and divided at their extremities, the more incapable are they of beating or crossing; they remain there nearly motionless during the action of the knees, which in consequence appear to rub uncouthly one against the other, and thus the *entrechat* being neither cut, beaten, nor crossed at the feet, cannot have that rapidity and brilliancy which constitute its principal merit. A good method of studying, diligent practice, and time, as I have already intimated, are the only means of remedying this defect.

In the case of bow-legged dancers.

Bow-legged dancers are sinewy, rapid, and brilliant in all things that require more strength than

agility. Sinewy and light on account of the direction of their muscular *faisceaux*, and the thickness and resistance of their articular ligaments; rapid because they cross more low than high, their feet having but a small distance to perform the beating steps in; and brilliant by reason of the light being so very conspicuous between their legs as they cross or uncross. This light is precisely what we may term the light and shade of dancing; for if the *temps* of the *entrechat* be neither cut nor beaten, but on the contrary, rubbed or rolled one upon the other, there is no light to relieve the shade, and the legs, through being too closely joined, present an indistinct mass, void of brilliancy and effect. Bow-legged dancers are usually not very skilful, as they chiefly reckon on their bodily strength. This very strength it is that opposes the greatest obstacle to their acquiring ease and pliancy.

Observations on a person in the act of leaping.

“Nature instructs and acts of itself, without any assistance from reason. When a person wishes to leap, he rapidly elevates his arms and shoulders, which are thus simultaneously set in motion, together with part of the body, and remain elevated so long as they are supported by the movement of the body (the loins of which are bent,) and by the impulse of the joints or springs of the thighs, knees and feet. This extension is made in two directions, upwards and forwards; the motion to send the body forwards, places it so at the moment of the leap; and that destined to carry it up, makes it describe a large segment of a circle, rendering the leap yet more rapid.”

Leonardo da Vinci here gives us a true definition of the actions of a man in leaping, and the means he employs to spring from the ground. He explains the strength and impetuosity of the arms and shoulders and their movements, and the manner in which they raise the body up after them. He points out the position of the body bent and resting gracefully on the hips and knees, which by bending prepare to give the impulse and facilitate the spring of the instep. Much study is required to make these movements in a graceful manner, for if done carelessly nothing can be more uncouth.

In *entrechats* and steps of elevation a dancer can display every attitude and arabesque. According to my opinion the finest positions are such as are shown by figures 1, 2, 3, 4, Plate xiii., and by figure 4, Plate xii.

For *entrechats* and steps of elevation where the body is inclining forwards, see figures 2, 4, Plate xiii. For *entrechats* and steps of elevation where the body is inclining backwards, figure 3, Plate xiii. Ordinary elevation of a dancer, figure 4, Plate xii. Elevation of two feet in height, figure 5, Plate xii.

Attitudes of a dancer in Temps of elevation and *entrechats*. Figure 4, Plate xii., figures 1, 2, 3, 4, Plate xiii.

Elevation of two feet, figure 5, Plate xii.

CHAPTER VII.

PIROUETTES.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH A DANCER MUST PREPARE
FOR THE EXECUTION OF HER PIROULETTES; OF THE
VARIOUS POSITIONS SHE MAY TAKE IN TURNING,
AND OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF STOPPING
AND ENDING THEM.

THE art of dancing has been carried to so eminent a degree of perfection by Dauberval, Gardel, Vestris and other famous artists, that Noverre, who died during the first period known in the annals of Terpsichore, would have been surprised at the rapidity of its progress. The dancers of the early part of the last century were inferior to those who flourished towards the latter end of it, and still more to those of the beginning of the present age. We cannot but admire the perfection to which modern dancers have brought their art. They have a much more refined taste than their predecessors, and their performance is full of gracefulness and charms. Among our ancient artists those beautiful *temps* of perpendicularity and equilibrium, those elegant attitudes and enchanting arabesques were unknown. That energetic execution, that multiplicity of steps, that variety of *enchaînements* and pirouettes were not then in practice, and the rising art, unadorned with these complicated embellishments, confined the performer within the narrow limits of simplicity.

We must, however, grant in favour of our old masters that they very much excelled us in the serious and grave kind of dance, and that Dupré and Vestris the elder, were the most perfect models in this valued branch of dancing, in which they have been equalled by very few of their followers. It is true they possessed not that diversified execution, that abundance of steps and variety of movements now in vogue, but they were always extremely correct in what little they did. At present the art of dancing is become so complicated, and each dancer devotes herself so much to every branch, that it is somewhat difficult to meet with a dancer who succeeds completely in any one branch.

“Qui trop embrasse, mal étreinte.”

“Who aims at much, completes but little.”

Pirouettes owe their origin to the surprising advancement made of late years in dancing; they were unknown to Noverre and all our old masters, who thought it impossible to go beyond the three turns on the instep. The best dancers of the day prove the contrary, and owing to their steady uprightness, and the unshaken equilibrium which they observe as they revolve round, we may say that the present execution of pirouettes is really extraordinary. All good judges, I am confident, will acknowledge this to be true. They are aware how much labour it costs to hold oneself erect on one leg, and how much greater to do so on one's toes. Imagine, therefore, what difficulty there must be in turning in such a position without the slightest jerk in any part of the body.

We may reasonably consider Messrs. Gardel and Vestris as the inventors of pirouettes: the latter, by

perfecting and diversifying them, brought them most into vogue. Succeeding dancers improved on these, and performed some of all kinds in a most wonderful manner.

A pirouette of three or four turns in the second position and stopped in the same, or in an attitude, offers the greatest proof of a dancer's equilibrium. Nothing is more difficult in dancing than the performance of this pirouette.

Pirouettes require considerable exercise and study. One whom nature has favoured with pliancy and agility is always able to perform them gracefully, but the dancer who is light about the hips, whose legs are not sufficiently lithsome to open with ease, and who, therefore, cannot turn well on the instep, never meets with more than a partial success. Such a dancer should abandon all thoughts of distinguishing herself in the higher kind of pirouettes. It is the same with respect to bow-legged dancers and those who are of too vigorous a construction, the strength of their muscles deprives them of flexibility and softness, and their bodies are ever wavering as they turn round. Slender and close-legged dancers are far better adapted to this kind of step than the last mentioned; their limbs are more supple and pliant, and in general more turned out; three essential qualities in performing a good pirouette.

The sole of the foot is the true basis on which our whole machine is supported. A sculptor would be working in vain were he to rest his statue on a round and moveable foundation; it would undoubtedly fall and be broken to pieces. A dancer for the same reason must not be seen vacillating on the point of

support ; but by making use of all her toes as so many branches or roots, the expansion of which, increasing the space of ground she rests upon, maintains her body in a steady equilibrium, she must fasten herself in a manner to the board and hold herself with firmness and uprightness. If she neglects to do this her pirouette will be far from pleasing, her foot will lose its natural shape, and roll backwards and forwards from the great to the little toe ; this sort of wavering motion caused by the convexity of the toes, when in that position, impedes all stability, and by the vacillating of the instep the equilibrium is entirely lost.

Let your body be steadily fixed on your legs before you begin to do your pirouette (See figure 3, Plate vii.) and place your arms in such a position as to give additional force to the impulse which sends you round, and also to act as a balance to counterpoise every part of your body as it revolves on your toes.

Previous to the commencement of a pirouette, either from the inside or the outside, the dancer may pause in any sort of attitude or arabesque in which she intends to end her *enchaînement* ; but the positions best suited to her preparation, and that are generally chosen on account of the body being already upright on the legs, are the positions represented in figures 3, 4, 5, Plate i., figure 4, Plate iv., figures 1, 4, Plate v., figure 1, Plate vi., figure 1, Plate viii.

The usual attitudes adopted in the performance of pirouettes are those of the second position, figure 1, Plate vi., figure 1, Plate viii., and on the instep, figure 4, Plate ix. But why should dancers limit themselves to these positions of the body during the performance of their pirouettes ? When an artist has

once acquired an easy method of turning on her toes, a little exercise will soon enable her to turn in an arabesque or any other different attitude. I was one of the first to go out of the common track in this respect and, possessing much facility in the performance of pirouettes, I obtained some success in the new kind I invented, one of which is done in the following manner:—turn three times round in the second position, then place the leg and the arms in the arabesque attitude shown by figure 4, Plate x., and give three or four more turns in that attitude, ending it in the same. When this pirouette is correctly performed it has a very graceful effect.

Another very beautiful pirouette which I invented is this:—having turned a few times in the second position change it into that of the arabesque represented in figure 3, Plate xi.; stretch out your body, and incline it forwards as much as possible, whilst your head and arms gracefully follow its motion. This pirouette has something in it of a magical appearance, for as the body leans so much over and seems on the point of falling at each turn of the pirouette, one might think there was an invisible power that supported the dancer, who counter-balances the eccentricity from the line of gravity by the positions of the arms and legs and the great rapidity of the motions. I believe this pirouette to be the most difficult that can be performed. I have sometimes turned in the attitude of figure 4, Plate viii., which is a pirouette of much gracefulness, and produces a good effect; the angular position of the right arm giving it a peculiar brilliancy. It may be made much use of in a *pas de caractère*.

On one occasion, performing the part of Mercury, I took as I turned in my pirouette the attitude of the statue of Mercury by John of Bologna, figure 1 Plate ix. This fine position is very difficult to stand in. Unless a dancer is naturally arched he can never do it well, and the pirouette loses all its effect. The body must lean forward and the right arm develop itself almost entirely. The leg that is in attitude must be bent, and by its motion accompany the rounding contour of the position of the body. To render this attitude yet more graceful let the dancer stretch out his left arm, in which the *caduceus* is held: this takes off the angle at his elbows that would otherwise be presented, and gives the pirouette much more elegance. As to the manner in which the gesture expressive of the motive of this figure can be given, it should be remembered that the position of it is determined once for all, and therefore should not be tampered with.

I shall conclude by telling the pupil that she may pirouette in any kind of attitude or arabesque, provided that the design of the body, arms and legs be graceful, and every movement natural and free from affectation.

Pirouettes may be ended in any position, attitude, or arabesque whatever. The following are the various different sorts of pirouettes: *pirouettes à petits battements* on the instep, *pirouette à ronde de jambe*; *a la seconde avec grand ronde de jambe*; *avec fouetté*, *pirouette en attitude*, *en arabesque*; *pirouette sur le coude pied*; *pirouette en dedans à la seconde sur le coude pied et en attitude*; *pirouette renversée*; *pirouettes composées*, &c.

Position of the dancer in the beginning of a pirouette from the outside, figure 3, Plate vii.

N.B. The feet should be placed between the second and fourth position in the inside of the circle of the pirouette.

Position of the dancer in beginning a pirouette from the inside, figure 4, Plate vii.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE SERIOUS DANCER, THE *Demi-caractère*, AND
THE COMIC DANCER.

It is useless for a dancer to devote herself to the serious or heroic branch of her art, unless she is gifted with symmetry of form and elevation of stature; indispensable qualities for excellence in this kind of dancing. Those whose persons approach nearest in height and shape to the statues of Apollo or of Antinous, of the Troaian Venus or of Diana, are perfectly adapted to serious dancing. But they would never do for the *demi-caractère* or the pastoral. They are too majestic. (See figure 1, Plate xiv.)

All who wish to signalise themselves in this sort of performance must be of a noble, elegant and elevated carriage, replete with dignity and gracefulness, but void of the least affectation. The serious is the most difficult branch of dancing, it requires a close study, and cannot be duly appreciated but by connoisseurs and men of a refined and pure taste. She who excels in it deserves the highest applause. A correct execution of an *adagio* is the *ne plus ultra* of our art; I look on it as the touchstone of the dancer.

It is truly to be lamented that this, the finest style of dancing, is now so much neglected, I might perhaps say completely lost. The causes of this sad aban-

donment are chiefly attributable to that confusion of its different branches which at present disfigures the art of dancing: to that want of perseverance and study in most dancers, and to that vicious taste so conspicuous amongst most of those who frequent our theatres. Our masters, as I have before observed, were perfect in this style; but they have had very few followers. I know only one dancer capable of executing it to advantage; but let him not by an ill-placed complaisance endeavour to please a crowd of ignorant spectators. It is nevertheless in some measure to the artist that it belongs to bring back public taste to what is really good and beautiful by persisting in performing according to the true rules of art. It was said in one of the Parisian papers, speaking of my début at the Royal Academy of Music, that “for some length of time past the noble and serious kind of dancing has been treated with a singular contempt. It is indeed difficult to imagine how a dancer can give herself up to a branch of the art which is not popular, and yet serious dancing possesses its peculiar attractions. The beauty of the positions, the majesty of the movements, the dignity of the step, &c., give a certain character of importance to this kind of dancing, and allow us, comparing one art with another, to say that it is like sculpture. The ancients were very partial to this sort of recreation and cultivated it with great success. And if we despise it and neglect it, it is because we are far beneath that perfection which the Greeks and the Romans once obtained. Their mimic play bore some analogy to our grave style which is a reason why we should encourage the small number of dancers

who devote themselves to these performances. At some future time they may perhaps afford us an enjoyment which has hitherto been unknown to us."

This last sentence proves how great is the decay of the beautiful serious style of dancing: since the enjoyments which it promises are unknown to the public of the present day.

A serious or heroic dancer should be perfectly shaped in the legs, have a well-formed instep, and be extremely flexible and easy about the hips; without these essential qualities she cannot succeed in the line she has taken. In all other kinds of dancing it is not so requisite to possess these peculiar qualities in the same perfection, as in this. That preciseness and correctness which we always expect to see in the heroic artist, are not exacted from a *demi-caractère* or comic dancer. The heroic dancer must pre-eminently distinguish herself by the dignity of the upper part of her body, by the most harmonious combination of movements in her arms, and by the perfect finish of her execution in accordance with the best rules of the art.

This kind of dancing comprises the most beautiful developments, all the grand *temps*, and the noblest steps. The performer must attract the beholder's attention by the elegance of her design, the correctness of her poses, and the gracefulness of her attitude and arabesques. The finest *pirouette* in the second position, in attitude or on the instep, *entrechats* and all other *temps d'elevation* are required in this serious branch. We thus perceive that the performance of the heroic dances in our days is much more complicated than that of our predecessors, and that such an

artist must now possess a great number of accomplishments.

The *demi-caractère* dancer ought to be of the middle stature and of a slender and elegant shape. Those who are gifted with the proportions of Canova's Mercury or of his Hebe, are well suited to this charming kind of dancing.

This *demi-caractère* is a mixture of every style. Those who devote themselves to it, may make use of all the *temps* and steps which the art of dancing possesses. Their performance, however, must be noble and elegant, their *temps d'abandon* executed with some little restraint, and a certain amiable dignity ought to accompany their dance throughout. The *demi-caractère* does not admit those *grand temps* of the serious kind. A dancer of the *demi-caractère* is chiefly adapted to perform the parts of Mercury, Paris, Zephyr, or a Faun, and to represent the elegant and graceful manners of a Troubadour, &c.

The comic and pastoral must be the department of those whose persons are of the middle stature, who are thick set and vigorously constructed; and if a dancer together with these almost athletic proportions possesses a stature a little above the ordinary size, she is perfectly framed for the performance of character steps, the greater part of which belong to the comic branch. In my opinion, the very type of this branch consists in the imitation of all those natural motions which have been denominated dances in every age and amongst every people. To offer a true picture of pastoral life, the dancer in her performance must copy and mimic the steps, attitudes, simplicity of manner, and sometimes even those frolicsome and

rude motions of the villager, who, inspired by the sounds of his rustic instruments, and animated by the society and liveliness of his cherished companion, or beloved mistress, gives his whole soul up, without restraint, to the pleasures of dancing. The pupil who aspires to excellence in these imitations should study nature and the best painters who have enlivened their canvas with these interesting images. All dancers of the comic cast ought to study character steps, and imitate every kind of dancing peculiar to this or that country, giving their attitudes and movements the true national stamp of the dance they are performing. That correctness, which artists of the *demi-caractère* kind must possess, is not so rigorously exacted from dancers of the comic and pastoral branches.

The following are the character dances most practised *le Provençale, le Bolero, la Tarantelle, la Russe, l'Erossaise, l'Allemande, la Tyrolienne, la Cosaque, la Fournalane*. The *Pas chinois, pas sabotiers, l'Anglaise*, and steps of caricature, &c, belong to the lower comic style.

For the serious or heroic kind of dancing see figure 1, Plate xiv.

For the *demi-caractère* see figure 2, Plate xiv.

For the comic kind see figure 3, Plate xiv.

Example of the composition of groups, *attitudes de genre*, and principal posture of Bacchanalian dance, see figure 4, Plate xiv.

N.B. The explanation of the plates in their order is given at the end of the Treatise.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRECEPTOR.

NEW METHOD OF INSTRUCTION.

A DANCER, after having been educated in the best schools, must trust to her execution for attainment to the first rank: one who knows the theory only of the art can never be a good guide. An artist should be a first rate practical dancer before pretending to the title of a master; otherwise he cannot teach except in a commonplace and mechanical manner; nothing will be positive in his lessons, and his demonstrations must be always uncertain and without force. Incapable of imparting the true principles of a good execution, he affords his pupil no means of gaining success and distinction. A dancer coming from the misguiding hands of such a professor cannot possibly be perfect, she has not imbibed the true spirit of the art, and her performance is invariably cold, inexpressive and devoid of grace. She presents the spectator with a picture incorrectly drawn, feebly coloured, without any gradations of light and shade, and therefore wanting effect, and if she does not possess those qualities of design and colour, no less essential in dancing than in painting, it is in vain for her to hope to please and interest the beholder.

I have, however, seen instances of dancers brought up in a good school, who, from some circumstance or other, not being able to attain pre-eminence on the stage, have set themselves to teaching, and furnished our theatres with excellent dancers. But the number of such professors is very small, as nearly all those who are not distinguished by their practical work are incapable of producing a finished dancer.

A teacher to whom long exercise and experience have given views out of the common run, will always, before commencing to teach a pupil, examine whether her construction is suited to the attitude and motions of dancing; and whether, as she increases in growth, she will possess an elegant shape, a graceful mien and perfect pliancy in her limbs; for without these natural gifts and dispositions towards making a rapid progress in the study, the pupil will neither acquire skill nor reputation.

“ ————se adeguata

Non avia la figura, non imprenda

Un' arte sì gentile e delicate.”

A famous actor used to say that it is impossible to excel on the stage without the assistance of nature. These words, which experience itself dictated, are replete with truth.

The age of eight years is the best time of life for commencing the first rudiments of dancing; the young learner soon comprehends the demonstrations of her preceptor, who, being then perfectly enabled to judge of her physical powers, instructs her to much greater advantage.

As soon as the master has prepared his pupil by the first exercises, he should immediately make her

study the *lesson*, then perfect her in the *temps d'école*, in the principal steps of dancing, and afterwards point out and make her practise the kind of performance best adapted to her disposition, physical construction, and sex.

Men must dance in a manner very different from women; the *temps de vigueur* and bold majestic execution of the former, would have a disagreeable effect in the latter, who must shine and delight by bright steps and graceful motions, and by a modest voluptuousness and *abandon* in all their attitudes.

All who are of an elevated stature of either sex the master must set apart for the serious and more noble kind of dancing. Those of a middle height, and of a slender and delicate form, let him appoint to the *demi-caractère* or mixed kind. And those who are beneath that height, and of thick set, vigorous construction, let him devote to the comic branch and to steps of character. The master should finish his instructions by instilling into his pupils' mind, to make them truly accomplished, the real spirit and charm of their art. He must carefully point out the difference that exists between one kind of dancing and another, fix with preciseness the manner of its performance, and, finally, render his pupils familiar with all the diversified modes of dancing, which the varieties of costume they will have to adopt require.

If the pupil is endowed with a genius for composition, and a creative imagination, her master, skilful in his art, should let her exercise her powers for the invention and combination of steps, and make her acquainted with the finest designs of choreography.

At the age of twenty-three or twenty-four years a

dancer ought to have acquired the whole mechanism of her art and possess the most brilliant execution she is susceptible of attaining. In dancing, merit is not estimated by the number of years the performer has devoted to its practise. Nor is it to be under-rated as she advances in life. A dancer of the age of forty, if she be of a good school, and has been diligent in the preservation of what she has learned, may, by constant practice, still shine as an artist of the first order. Of this we have many instances.

New method of Instruction.

In order to omit nothing which might help to make a good dancer, I have added to the rules contained in this part, figures which I have had drawn from nature ; these represent the positions of the body, the arms, and the legs, the different postures, the attitudes and arabesques. The learners, having these examples before their eyes, will easily understand the theoretical principles which I have made known to them. The poet of the Tiber judiciously observes :

“ Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus. . . . ”

And in order that their execution may be correct I have drawn lines for them over the principal positions of these figures, which will give them an idea of the exact form they are to place themselves in, and to adopt in the different attitudes of dancing. It will remain for the learners to study well these geometrical lines, paying strict attention to their diversity. As soon as they have rendered this task (which I may

venture to term “mathematical” by reason of its precision) familiar to them, they will be sure to place themselves properly, giving proofs that they have been well taught, and have acquired a correct taste. I have preferred this novel method, which is undoubtedly a more sure and efficacious one, to that of a long and wearying description of the movements in dancing, which oftentimes do but perplex and confound the learner.

Were I to form a dancing school I should immediately put into practice amongst my pupils the following method, which I believe would prove very useful, and which all masters might adopt without having any knowledge of drawing. I should compose a sort of alphabet of straight lines, comprising all the positions of the limbs in dancing, giving these lines and their respective combinations their proper geometrical appellations: for instance, perpendiculars, horizontals, obliques, right angles, acute angles, obtuse angles, &c., a language which I deem almost indispensable in our lessons. These lines and figures, drawn upon a large slate and exposed to the view of a number of scholars, would be soon understood and imitated by them, and the master would not then be compelled to hold a long demonstrative course to each of them separately. The most diligent might take copies of those figures on small slates, and carry them away to study at home, in the same manner as a child when he begins to spell, studies his alphabet in the absence of the master. Let the reader compare the two following delineations with figures 1 and 3 of Plate vi., and he will conceive a clearer idea of the new system.

Fig. 1, plate VI.

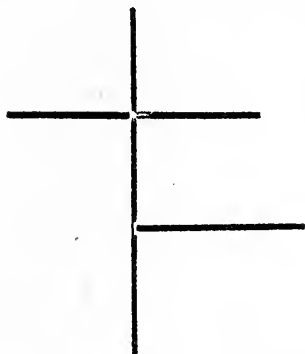
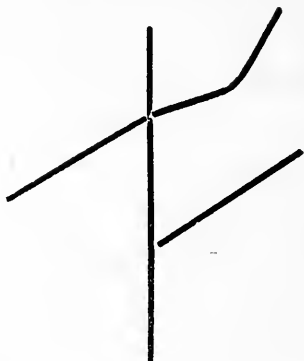


Fig. 3, plate VI.



It is necessary that the pupil should study these geometrical lines and all their derivatives. If he subjects himself to the task, he is certain of holding himself correctly afterwards, and will show that he received notions of a pure taste in the school at which he was educated.

A teacher cannot too strongly recommend his scholars to have incessantly before them those master-pieces of painting and sculpture which have been saved from the wreck of antiquity. Those immortal offsprings of genius, those enrapturing examples of the *beau idéal* of the fine arts, will considerably assist the cultivation of their taste. A dancer who does not know how to develop herself, to assume attitudes that set off her shape, who is deficient in gracefulness, and void of good taste, can never afford the smallest delight to the connoisseur and cultivated spectator.

Of the Composition of Steps.

I shall conclude with some advice, that may, perhaps, be of service to young artists, who, having successfully combatted all the first difficulties of their art, wish to betake themselves to the combination of steps.

Why should they not follow the example of Dupré in order to hasten their progress in this branch of study? That celebrated dancer used to dance extempore to familiar airs; by which means he rendered his imagination more creative in the forming off-hand of steps and *enchaînements* and accustomed his ear to catch the measure and rhythm of the music with greater rapidity.

This exercise would prove extremely useful for developing the genius of a youthful dancer. Her first attempts might probably be incorrect, sometimes even ungraceful, but when she has once laid the foundation of the step, if I may use the term, she can afterwards correct and make all the changes suitable to its perfection. I have often practised this extemporising, and had the good fortune at least of producing some things that were tolerable. I have frequently by this exercise been enabled to compose with facility a variety of steps which I had to execute in public, and particularly when I allowed myself a little time to perfect their combination. M. Gardel, speaking once of our old dancers, mentioned, with approbation, this practise of Dupré, who at the same time that he was making himself an excellent dancer, gave full scope to his genius. His remark struck me, and I immediately set about imitating that distinguished performer. I made my first essay under the eye of my father. Whilst he extemporised on the pianoforte, I endeavoured to follow his musical intentions, and to form *pas de deux, de trois*, which I afterwards performed in the operas *Raphael, Achille, Debutade*, &c. These essays were so fortunate as to meet with general approbation.

CHAPTER X.

FIRST EXERCISES. TEMPS : THE LESSON : GAIT.

Elementary Positions.

IN the first position the legs are quite straight, the two heels close to each other, the feet turned completely out in a straight line (figure 1, Plate i.)

In the second position the legs are more apart but only by the length of the foot (figure 2, Plate ii.)

In the third position the feet half cross each other and are close together (figure 3, Plate i.)

The fourth position is very similar to the third, with this difference, that the feet half cross each other without touching (figure 1, Plate ii.)

In the fifth position the feet cross each other entirely (figure 4, Plate i.)

In all these positions the knees must be bent without raising the heels in the least from the ground ; but to give flexibility and strength to the instep the position should be often practised on the toes, (figure 5, Plate i., and figure 3, Plate ii.)

Battements.

A *battement* consists of the movement of one leg in the air, whilst the other supports the body. They are of three kinds, viz., *grands battements*, *petits battements*, and *battements* on the instep.

Grands battements are done by detaching one leg

from the other and raising it to the height of the hip, extending it to the utmost. (See figure 5, Plate ii., which shows also the manner in which a beginner must hold himself.) After the performance of the *battement*, the leg falls again into the fifth position. They may be crossed either behind or before. *Grands battements* enable a dancer to turn her legs completely outwards, and give much facility to the motions of her thighs, for the high evolutions and the execution of *grands temps*. *Grands battements* are made both forwards and backwards: when they are done forwards the leg must be in the positions shown in figure 1 & 2 of Plate iv: when backwards, its positions must be that of figure 3, Plate iv.

Petits battements are performed in the same way, but instead of raising the leg into the air you only detach it a little from the other leg, without letting your toes leave the ground. These *battements* make the legs very lithesome, because the pupil is obliged to make these movements very quickly.

Petits battements on the instep. It is the hip and knee that prepare and form these movements; the hip guides the thigh in its openings, and the knee by its flexion performs the *battements*, making the lower part of the leg cross either before or behind the other leg, which rests on the ground. Suppose that you are standing on your left foot, with your right leg in the second position, and the right foot just touching the ground at the toe; cross before the left, by bending your knee and opening again sideways, then bend the knee again, crossing your foot behind, opening also sideways; and so continue to do several of these *battements* one after the other. Gradually increase in

quickness, till you can perform them so rapidly that the eye cannot count them. These *battements* have a very pretty effect, and give much brilliancy to the motions of the legs. They should also be practised a great deal with both legs resting on the toes.

Ronds de jambes.

To begin your *rond de jambe* from the outside take the same position as that in which you commence your *petits battements*. Suppose it is the left leg that stands on the ground whilst the right in the second position is prepared for the movement; make it describe a semi-circle backwards, which brings your legs to the first position, and then continue on the sweep till it completes the whole circle, ending at the place from whence it started. This is what we technically term *rond de jambe*.

The *rond de jambe* from the inside is begun in the same position, but the right leg, instead of commencing the circle backwards, must do so forwards. After the pupil has practised the *ronds de jambe* on the ground, she should exercise herself in performing them in the air, keeping the leg that supports her body on the toes.

The pupil in her first exercises ought to rest her hand on something that she may keep herself upright, and exercise each leg alternately. When she has acquired some facility in this, let her practise without holding; this gives her uprightness and equilibrium, essential qualities in a good dancer. She will also thereby gain strength and the means of executing with ease every kind of step. She must repeat this practice daily to gain proficiency. For were she gifted

with the rarest talent she could never become perfect but by incessant application and study.

Of the Temps.

Temps is the general name given to any movement of the leg.

Of the Pas.

The *pas* denotes the different ways of placing the legs in walking or in leaping, either in a straight line or in a circle. The name *pas* is generally given to a combination of steps arranged to some musical air : thus we say such an one made a beautiful *pas* on such a *chaccone* or on such a *gigue*. *Pas* are often combined for the performance of two or more persons ; *pas de deux*, *pas de trois*, *quatre*, *cinq*, &c.

OF THE LESSON.

The combination of elementary exercises and of the principal steps of dancing is what is usually termed the lesson.

The learner first exercises herself in bending her knees in all the positions, in the practice of *grands* and *petits battements*, the *rond de jambe* on the ground and in the air, the *petits battements* on the instep, &c. Afterwards come the *temps de courante simples et composès*, the *coupés à la première*, *à la seconde et composès*, the *attitudes*, the *grand rond de jambe*, *temps de chaccone*, the *grands fouettés* facing and revolving, the *quart de tour*, the *pas de Bourrée* and the various movements of different kinds of *pirouettes*. These exercises tend to form a good dancer, and afford

her the means of obtaining success. The lesson concludes by the practise of *pirouettes*, of *temps terre-à-terre* and *temps de vigueur*.

But after the pupil is enabled to perform all the exercises which the lesson comprehends, she does not yet attain the end which she in the beginning hoped to reach. To become a finished dancer she must divest herself of that schoolgirl appearance which necessarily hangs about her, and by her boldness and ease of execution at length show that she is mistress of her art. Let her whole attention be then directed to delighting her beholders by the elegance of her positions, the gracefulness of her movements, the expressive animation of her features, and by a pleasing *abandon* which ought to accompany every kind of dancing. These qualities constitute a really perfect dancer, and with them she is certain of enrapturing all who behold her.

GAIT.

A graceful manner of walking on the stage is of much importance to a dancer, although a number of our artists neglect it, both in moments of repose and in presenting themselves to the public for the execution of a *pas*. This is a serious defect, as it in the first place offends the eye, and secondly, deprives the performance of its pleasing illusion.

A good gait is very useful, for in that consists one of the first qualities of a good dancer, which is a graceful carriage. Let your legs be well extended in their movements or steps, and your thighs turned perfectly out, all the lower parts of your legs will then be turned in the same manner. Your steps should be

no longer than the length of one of your feet. Avoid stiffness in your movements, which must be neither too slow nor too quick, as both extremes are equally unpleasing. Do not separate your legs from each other sideways. Carry your head upright and your waist steadily; by which means your body is kept in an elegant position. Let your chest project a little, keep your shoulders back and let your arms fall naturally on each side. (See also Chapter iv.)

CHAPTER XI.

ON PANTOMIME AND THE STUDIES NECESSARY FOR A
PANTOMIMIC PERFORMER.

“——atto degli occhi e delle membra.”

Tasso.

“—————art ingénieux

De peindre la parole et de parler aux yeux.”

Brebœuf.

HAVING frequently reflected on Ballets and the usual method of composing them, it has as frequently occurred to me, that their prevailing defects might be removed; and that, by enlarging the pantomimic department of them, and by improving the incidental dancing, they might be advanced to something like perfection.

Pantomime is, undoubtedly, the very soul and support of the Ballet. The art of gesture possesses powers capable of raising an interest unknown to the generality of artists; and it is to the slight attention paid to this department, and to a want of knowledge among composers, that must be attributed the glaring imperfections that prevail throughout the greater part of those pieces improperly styled *Ballets*, which, however, are continually performed at theatres of the first rank.

Gesture is the earliest sort of language that man

acquires from nature. Children and savages make use of it for the purpose of supplying their wants. It is a means of communicating the ideas and the sentiments of those who talk different languages, and is, in fact, a resource for such unfortunate beings as are deprived of the faculties of hearing and speaking. What grounds are these then for exciting an interest in favour of this imitative art, and for its cultivation ! “Pantomime” says a great master of the fine arts, “expresses with rapidity the movements of the soul—it is the language of all nations—of all ages—and of all occasions ; it portrays more perfectly even than speech itself, extreme grief or excessive joy.” The ardent mind of Diderot knew how to appreciate this natural expression and he lavishes upon it all due praise.

The following beautiful lines will, perhaps, convey a still clearer idea of the importance of our subject :—

“Negli occhi, ove il sembiante più si ficca.”

Dante.

“E ciò che lingua esprimer ben non puote
Muta eloquenza ne 'suoi gesti espresse.”

Tasso.

“Words (when the poet would your soul engage)
Are the mere garnish of an idle stage,
When passion rages, eloquence is mean ;
Gestures and looks best speak the moving scene.”

Young.

“His rude *expression* and untutored *airs*,
Beyond the power of language, will unfold
The form of beauty, smiling at his heart ;
How lovely ! how commanding !

Akenside.

Independently of the natural gestures, it is known

that the figurative and symbolical language of motions, composed of regulated signs or signs of intelligence, is sometimes more striking than the slower and systematic language of words. This is the origin of Pantomime. The Oriental nations have adopted it, and are greatly attached to it. Their imagination ardently availed itself of this mode of expression—that is, expression by an imagery of things,—and hence arises also their partiality for a picturesque style. It was from reflections like these, which say so much in favour of the art of Pantomime, that I studied the science of composing Ballets, and of establishing more precise and exact rules for conducting them, consulting on such a subject the rules both of art and of taste. “Art furnishes rules, and taste exceptions; taste discovers to us on what occasions art ought to be subservient, and when in turn the former should submit.” MONTESQUIEU.

“Man has three means of expressing his ideas and feelings; by speech, tone of voice, and gesture. By gestures we understand those exterior movements and attitudes of the body which relate to the inward operations of the mind. *Gestus*, says Cicero, *est conformatio quædam et figura totius oris et corporis*.

“I name speech first because we generally pay more attention to it than to the two others; which latter however possess many advantages over the former. Our tone of voice and gesture are of a more natural and extensive use; for by them we supply every deficiency in speech. By gesture we present to the eyes all that we cannot express to the ears; it is a universal interpreter that follows us to the very extremities of the globe, and makes us intelligible to

the most uncivilized hordes. It is understood even by animals. Speech is the language of reason; it convinces our minds: tones and gestures form a sentimental discourse that moves the heart. Speech can only give utterance to our passions by means of reflection on their relative ideas. Voice and gesture express them to those we address in an immediate and direct manner. In short, speech, or rather the words which compose it, is an artificial institution, formed and agreed upon between men for a more distinct reciprocal communication of their ideas, whilst gesture and the tone of voice, are, I may say, the dictionary of simple nature; they are a language innate in us, and serve to exhibit all that concerns our wants and the preservation of our existence; for which reason they are rapid, expressive and energetic. Such a language, of which the terms are rather those of nature than of cultivation, cannot but be an inexhaustible source for an art whose object is to move the deepest sensations of the soul."

These lines of LE BATTEUR's speak sufficiently in favour of pantomime and may serve for an introduction to the lessons of the performer.

Gestures are of two kinds, natural and artificial. The first are in our nature, we are born with them, they are the outward signs of all that passes within us. The latter we derive from art; they express by imitation all objects that are independent of ourselves. *Natural* gestures are the physical signs of our sentiments; *artificial* ones the emblems of all that is outside the moral world. Those of the former kind exhibit the emotions of love, sadness, anger, hatred, joy, fear, pleasure, despair, &c., and are what we may

call the mechanical effects of our intellectual over our physical being. Those of the latter sort serve to represent objects, as a warrior, old age, a child, a temple, a ship, arms, robes, &c.; they can also describe a storm, a fallen edifice, a fight, a death, &c. There is another class of gestures, termed in pantomime gestures of *convention*, which are often necessary to cast a light on some obscure part of the performance. These gestures of *convention*, which art has created and custom established, paint those things which we cannot perfectly understand but with the assistance of our imagination, and all events the multiplicity of which cannot be represented by one person only. Such are, for instance, a festival, a wedding, a coronation, the imitation of a father, a husband, a son, the indication of power, slavery, revolt, &c., all of which cannot be clearly understood, but by gestures of *convention*. The spectator soon learns their meaning from theatrical habit, besides they always bear some kind of analogy to the things they represent, which makes them sufficiently intelligible; they are indeed a sort of symbolic signs. From what we read of ancient pantomimes, it seems evident that they had a great variety of gestures, both of art and of convention, since we are told that they could express past and future time, and even abstract ideas. An ancient writer speaks of a trial of skill between Roscius and Cicero, in which these two celebrated men were to express the same things by different means—the orator by his speech, the player by his gestures. It does not appear that Roscius gained the victory over his rival, neither is he to be considered as vanquished, for he conceived so high

an idea of his own art from this trial that he immediately wrote a book on gesticulation, which he therein placed on a level with eloquence itself. A greater proof cannot be brought forward in favour of the perfection of ancient pantomime.

Among the ancients the name of *mimes* was originally given to those dialogues which represented their habits and morals. These dialogues were spoken by men, and when necessary by women also. The best compositions of the kind were those of Sophron, who lived before Plato, those of Xenarchus, and those of Publius Sirus, a Roman. Laberius, Philistion, Lentulus, and Marulus shone also in this class of comedy which was very similar to the "*Atellanes*," formerly represented at Averso. These authors were termed mimographers from the Greek word *mimos*, an imitation, and *grapho*, I write. The name *mime* was afterwards given to those performers who imitated by their gestures only what was spoken by the *histriones*, or comedians and singers or declaimers, both in tragedy and comedy. These performers in the sequel degenerating into frivolity, bombast and indecency, were merely regarded as buffoons and jugglers. The men were treated with the utmost contempt, and the women regarded only as concubines and prostitutes.

Some time afterwards, two celebrated actors in the reign of Augustus, gave the art of mimicry a new birth, and brought it to much perfection and distinction. It was under their skilful hands that it acquired a splendour and importance unknown even in the brilliant ages of Greece. Their dexterity in representing sentiment by gesture became at length astounding. The Romans gave the name of Panto-

mimes to those performers who expressed all kinds of things by means of gestures. The arts of Pantomime and dancing were afterwards called *Saltatio*. The word *Tripudium* was also used to signify dancing. The Greeks termed both, when united, *Orchestica*.

Lucian, in his celebrated dialogue upon dancing, raised that art to much dignity, by presenting it in its true light. He pointed out its utility; the many advantages derived from it; presented all the charms with which it abounds, and confirmed the judgment of those who decreed it an equal rank with tragedy and comedy.

Scipion Maffei very erroneously believed that Lucian was merely railing, according to his usual way, when he in his work gave a certain character of importance to dancing and set a high value on the talent of the performer. But his motive for writing on Pantomimic representations cannot in any way be suspected; his ideas of it seem the same throughout: he nowhere contradicts himself; besides, he is not the only author that speaks with enthusiasm on that ancient spectacle. The illustrious Veronese, it is true, does not appear to have bestowed much thought upon this subject; but it is no less true that Dancing, Pantomime, and Ballets were in his time very far from that degree of perfection to which they have since been carried, both in France and Italy. What we are told of the ancients surprises us, but we have discovered many things which might have astonished them.

Let us only require that which is reasonable and natural to make a Pantomime truly interesting and agreeable. Let us go no further; if we exceed these

limits of art and good sense, our efforts will unquestionably be fruitless.

The outward motions of the body are effected by the influence of the inward operations of the mind.

All gestures that indicate, in a clear and striking manner, the objects to which they refer, never fail of meeting with applause at a theatre. Beware, therefore, of making use of any that are trivial or ignoble; copy the best models, but improve, if possible, on them in your imitation.

M. Goia, among other philosophers, observes: "Sentiments, mutually communicated, have a reference either to present or distant objects; or they relate to internal sensations. When the object is present the eyes are turned to it, while the staff or finger points it out, the body either approaches or shrinks from it; thus forming a kind of dictionary of this mute language. Signs made in this manner may be termed indicative.

"When the attention is directed to a distant object, as for instance, when a savage would discover some animal to kill it, or would describe another by which he was attacked, he expresses its howling, roaring or peculiar cry, by the effect of his own voice; its form and motions he describes by the gesticulation of his hands, arms or head, and this species of signs may be called *imitative*.

"When the same person would express his own peculiar wants, fears, or any feeling which the eye cannot perceive, he first exhibits those peculiar attitudes which are produced by such feelings. B. seeing the place where he had been affrighted, will repeat the cries of fear, and the movements of terror,

in order that his companion A. may not expose himself to the same danger which he had experienced. A person deaf and dumb wishing to show that he was trampled on by a horse, first describes the swift motion of the horse's feet with his hands, and then with his fingers he traces out on his body those parts that have been injured, showing at the same time how he fell.

“After exhibiting those external signs which accompany the affections, the savage, like a deaf and dumb person, seizes on the resemblance he finds between the internal sensations of the mind and the external qualities of bodies, employing the latter to express the former. Thus violent anger is compared to the flame or the tempest; tranquillity of mind to a serene sky; doubt is expressed by the two hands that would weigh two bodies; and such signs as these are called *figurative* or *symbolic*. These *indicative*, *imitative* and *figurative* gestures, then, provide a threefold means of communication between ideas and feelings, enlisting into their service all the aids afforded by the laws of association.

“To classify the elementary materials of which this language is composed, we must reduce them to three kinds, namely, gestures, sounds, and symbolic writings. The first class includes the actions and attitudes of the body employed to express the form or motion of a visible object: the second contains those sounds of a voice with which are described the animals or the noise accompanying the motion of inanimate bodies; the third comprehends those hieroglyphics which are frequently traced upon the sand, the bark of trees, or any other surface to

indicate visible objects or the motions appertaining to them."

The actor points out with his hands each part of his body as also all objects at a distance from him, by stretching his hands towards them. His eyes should accompany each movement, and by adding to the general expression serve to point out more clearly the object to which he directs his thought.

Symbolic gesture and gestures of *convention* and of art, are employed to signify everything that cannot be exactly imitated or counterfeited by man, by simply natural gestures alone. They show to the imagination of the spectator all that cannot be seen by him on the stage. They, in general, bear as much analogy as possible to the things they endeavour to describe. This is their chief object.

Study to make yourself understood by imitating the form of the objects you wish to represent; and when that is not possible, point out as clearly as you can their use, &c., so that your beholders may understand what you wish to express without ambiguity: let all your expressions be precise and distinct. One of Lucian's commentators has said that Pantomime is capable, by gestures of convention, of expressing past and future times, with every abstract action which bears no relation to the passing moment: this is precisely what was done by the ancient Pantomimes. I am aware that many persons would be ignorant of the meaning of these artificial gestures which are not founded on passion or nature; but in that case, to raise a desire to learn their signification, the Ballet master, and those who represent his compositions, should exhibit pieces both easy and accurate, in order

that the public, appreciating their beauty, may apply themselves to the *grammar*, if we may so call it, of this new language.

This is in some measure reasonable enough and might be done with no great difficulty in Italy, where the people are naturally inclined to Pantomime and where the actors already make use of gestures of *convention*. In France some length of time, and a course of deep study, would be required to attain the same degree of perfection. The French Pantomimists have adopted only a small number of gestures, of which the greater part are destitute of correct expression. Thus circumscribed in their means their art cannot accomplish its due end, which is to represent to the eye a picturesque imitation of all things.

In some theatres, where ballets have been intended to please the intellect as much as the sight, this art has made considerable progress, and the number of gestures of art have much increased. The want of them was felt, their advantages were discovered, and success seems to have crowned the innovation.

It is natural to the Italian to gesticulate; it is not surprising therefore, if the actors of Italy are superior to those of other countries, or if Pantomime is there carried to so great a degree of perfection as to be capable of expressing perfectly all the passions, with every object sensible to the sight. They are, however, most materially assisted by the gestures acquired by art, which have greatly enlarged the sphere of their performances.

Pantomime being incapable of producing any very striking effect, except when employed in expressing strong emotions, and objects easy of perception, the

Italians have selected the most celebrated deeds of both history and fiction, the more deeply to fix the attention of the spectators : these magnificent pictures are always represented in a vigorous manner and are sometimes sublime. This system excites great interest in the Ballet, and renders the Pantomime department important, at the same time increasing and varying the pleasure of the public.

The Italian, endowed by nature with deep sensibility and a vivid imagination, is fond of powerful impressions, and prefers the stately and pathetic style to the comic or even the pleasing. He is willing to be amused by theatrical representations, but he would rather be affected ; and hence arises the interest taken by him in the performance of Ballets. It may be observed that the Ballet has been more essentially assisted by the art of painting in Italy than in France ; nor has the art itself lost anything by it, but on the contrary gained infinitely.

In France, however, lately, several of my friends have distinguished themselves for their Pantomime and have attained the same perfection in expressing the passions as I have witnessed in Italy. This need not appear extraordinary, if it be considered that man is everywhere nearly the same. The only defect in these performers was a want of sufficient gesture to express perfectly every circumstance ; but this was less their fault than that of their art. Notwithstanding this, their description of sentiment was true, their features spoke, and their attitudes were gracefully conceived. I noticed that the best of these pantomimic performers were from provincial theatres ; they were more industrious, and their stock of pieces was greater than at the

capital. In Paris about a dozen pieces form their round of representation; at Bordeaux, Marseilles, Lyons, &c., every Ballet that has succeeded is performed: at Paris, on the contrary, those only are performed that have been introduced by private interest and favour. I remember at Bordeaux, on one of my benefit nights, it occurred to me in order to raise public curiosity, that my Ballet companions should represent a comedy. The attempt appeared very extraordinary and was deemed impossible of execution. The performers, however, being all endowed with some talent, and very expert in Pantomime, boldly undertook the performance, and succeeded in giving a perfect representation of that delightful Comedy called *Folies Amoureuses*. A severe but just journalist, giving an account of this performance, thus expresses himself: "The piece was played not only with *[spirit]*, which might easily be expected of dancers, but with truth also, a quality that becomes every day more rare. *Regnard* was both felt and expressed. The novices in speech did not stand in need of that indulgence which had been prepared for any failure in this hazardous enterprise."

This occurrence ought to prove satisfactorily that in France there are dancers capable of performing Pantomime perfectly; and if they do not introduce more of it into their parts, the cause of it should be attributed to the composers, who neglect too much this department, or who have not sufficient talent to put Pantomime upon an equality with dancing.

It is not consistent with the character of Ballets to treat of abstract things, nor to entertain the public with long details. This sort of representation ought

only to exhibit such actions and images as create interest and pleasure, without giving the spectator the least occasion to guess at the intentions of the performer. A Pantomime must be simple, clear and correct, if it be meant for a faithful interpretation of our sensations. All that cannot be understood at the moment of the action is mere imperfection, which it is the Ballet master's duty to regard as useless.

Pantomime, like dancing, has its different kinds. Gesture, look, carriage, in short, all the physical expressions, are not exactly the same in every person : they vary with the age, character, condition of the actor, who ought, therefore, to pay the strictest attention to those kinds only of which he finds himself more peculiarly capable.

Unless the actor possesses certain physical qualities and a natural disposition to Pantomime, he cannot expect to see his endeavours crowned with success. It is an incontrovertible fact, that without the gifts of nature, it is impossible for us to become perfect in any one art or science whatsoever ; but at the same time, though endued with every requisite, were we to neglect the sage precepts of art, we should equally fail of our end. Those lessons formed into laws and established by ages of experience, are essential, nay, almost indispensable, to the attainment of perfection. The great Longinus says "that nature is mainly instrumental in conducting us to the grand and sublime ; but unless art takes her by the hand, she is as one blindfolded, knowing not whither her steps are leading her."

It was by such a direction of art that the chisels which created the *Apollo* and the *Venus* surpassed the

hand of nature in the formation of beauty. *Ars naturam perficit.*

What is said of sculpture, painting, and all the fine arts, can be said with the same truth of Pantomime. A Pantomimist requires considerable assistance from art to be much valued : his imitation should be faithful, but at the same time, finer than the original. This is the end he must try to attain. Experience, good taste, diligence and study, will conduct him towards it. Art embellishes while she corrects nature ; the former assists the latter and receives an ample reward for her aid.

The first study of the Pantomimic actor ought to be dancing : he must devote many years of steady application to working at this art : then his movements, his gestures, and his gait, will be more easy and more graceful. Some notion of drawing will be also very useful to him. Here let us observe, with the celebrated Hogarth, in his analysis of Beauty :—
“ That all those actions which we use in our ordinary and daily occupation are performed almost in straight lines, or in lines as nearly straight as possible ; but all graceful movements, which display cultivated manner are performed in undulating lines.” This judicious remark is worthy of the attention of all classes of actors as by it they may learn to give gracefulness to their actions and their gestures. The study of oblique lines is also of much utility in varying their gestures and in making their attitudes and motions appear more picturesque. By a knowledge of drawing their performance will present many attractions of a most pleasing kind, and when united to a knowledge of dancing afford them powerful means to

attain perfection. These two arts enable the actor to be light, nimble and flexible; all his movements will be easy, graceful, and executed with taste; his attitudes and gestures will be elegant and natural. Music also is of equal service and will contribute in no small degree to the attainment of excellence. By the study of music he renders himself capable of following more exactly the rhythm of his art, and makes his performance harmonize better with the measure and cadence of the tune. To these requisite qualities let him add an expressive countenance always in strict unison with the subject he represents, and thus complete the theatrical illusion.

It is very advisable for an actor to study history and poetry; from them he will reap much profit. They enlighten his mind, enlarge his views, and give him true notions of taste. They afford him the first lessons towards a knowledge of the nature of the human heart in its full extent, and of the real character of those personages he will be frequently called upon to represent.

We may see, from what has been said, that the modern pantomimic actor does not require all those qualifications which constituted the art of the ancient, who was obliged to be at once perfect in pantomime, dancing and composition. These arts have in our days been carried to a degree of excellence which neither the Greeks nor Romans ever arrived at. This pre-eminence may be ascribed to the better judgment of the moderns, who have made an appropriate division of each department.

“The seven against Thebes,” “Hercules,” “Ajax,”
“The Adultery of Mars and Venus,” “Paris,” and a

few other Ballets of the ancients are but weak and imperfect sketches when compared with *Télémaque*, *Psyché*, *Prométhée*, *Niobé*, *Les Amours de Venus*, *Ulysse*, *Almaviva et Rosine*, *Cléopâtre*, *Zéphyre et Flore*, &c., all modern productions, in which taste, genius and reason are happily combined to charm the eyes and interest the heart.

With us it is only the young that devote themselves to dancing and Pantomime, whilst those of more advanced years, who possess both talents and experience, apply themselves to composition.

Lucian says that the stature of a Pantomimic actor must be neither very tall nor extremely short: his limbs neither too strong nor too slight. He wishes his figure to be as nearly as possible of the proportions of the stature of Polycletes. But as this masterpiece of sculpture has not been transmitted to us, we must take as a substitute that of Antinous. A performer of that height and muscular constructure may undertake a number of different characters, since his physical powers are adapted to all branches of the art. An easy remedy for trifling defects is found in the manner of dressing and acting. Our Ballets have the advantage of being performed by a great number of persons. Each actor or dancer takes that part which best suits his peculiar figure and talent. It is the duty of the Ballet-master to look into these particulars, and judiciously to distribute and appropriate the parts. The various characters of youth, manhood, and old age, should be filled by different actors, whose stature and feature, resemble in some degree the idea we have of such personages. The theatrical system of the present time is not the same

as it was formerly. Now each actor and actress takes one particular kind of character by which means our dramatic representations are more naturally and therefore much more perfectly performed.

In France the parts and lines of actors have been divided and sub-divided in the minutest manner, that all may be in a sort of exact accordance. The following is a classification of some of the principal parts: *Jeunes premières: jeunes premières ingénuites; amoureux; amoureux marqués; coquette de Marevaux; grandes coquettes; petits maîtres; marquis; première rôles; pères nobles; mères nobles; rôles à Manteaux; duegnes (Spanish personages) financiers; soubrettes; valets; Figaros; soubrettes de bon ton; grandes livrées; servantes et valet de Molière; travestis; Crispin; Scapin; caricatures; Cassandre; grimes; rois; reines; princesses; chevaliers; grands prêtres; confidents; utilités, &c., &c.*

This example deserves to be followed in every branch of theatrical art. But it frequently happens that through motives of interest or ambition, an actor is induced to aim at acquiring a talent as universal as possible. This is well enough if he finds himself really endowed with the necessary qualifications. Indeed, I would then advise him to imitate everything, to render himself a perfect master of mimicry of every kind. It may be here remembered that the Greeks called their players *hypocrites*. Among the ancients one and the same actor used generally to represent a great number of personages (see Lucian, Cassiodorus and others). Sometimes, also, two performers undertook to play every part in a piece; but afterwards their number having increased, there were as many actors as parts; though this was not always the case.

A player ought to study the genius, character, manner and customs of the various nations, the natives of which he may have to represent. Let nature be his constant model. In this respect he shares the labours and honours of the composer. The varied features of his countenance must exhibit the different sensations of his soul, and his eyes, particularly, must add to the expression of all those feelings which his gesture is intended to convey. The gesture of the mime being ever in accord with his eye, should, as it were, speak: as Virgil says

“Signat cuncta manu loquitur Polyhymnia gestu.”

Everything must be well understood, everything deeply felt, if we wish to represent it correctly. We hear that Polus to enable himself to act with greater truth the scene in which Electra, in the most poignant anguish, brings the urn that encloses her brother's ashes, took that which did really contain the last remains of his own sons; the sight of this, by renewing his grief, could not fail to make him express, with an energy and perfection that art can never teach, that keen anguish under which his mind must have laboured. Let nature therefore, be most attentively studied, even down to her minutest operations.

It is the composer's duty to inform the actor of the subject, argument, and meaning of the Ballet, and especially to instruct him as to the nature of the part which he has to fulfil. He ought to shew him the proper gestures that will express his own ideas in the Pantomime, and also guide him in all his movements, that the time and cadence of the music may be preserved with precision.

Every action in Pantomime must be regulated

according to the music, which ought also to participate in the expression of the passions. The effect resulting from this harmonious union creates the most pleasing emotions in the spectator. The Ballet-master should set the gestures, attitudes, and steps, exactly to the rhythm of the tunes, and so manage that each sentiment expressed may be responsive to the measure. Let the mimic and dancer however, beware not to force this action in order to prove that they really are in accord with the music: all must be blended together, and the art concealed as much as possible. The accompaniment must possess the true tone and colouring of the pantomimic action.

The Ballet-master must avoid in his compositions all that is exaggerated, dull, vulgar or trivial, particularly in subjects of a serious nature.

The expressions of violent passion, or of those which arise from any extraordinary situation, are not the most difficult task of an actor. "The great difficulty in the art," Marmontel observes, "is a simultaneous expression of two sentiments agitating the soul, when the mind wavers from one to the other; or in the gradations and shades either of one passion or of two contrary ones, in their delusive momentary calm, in their rapid fury, their impetuous transports, in short, in all the varied accidents that form together a picture of the storms which convulse the human heart."

What skill is here required to offer a faithful representation of such emotions on the stage. It is indeed the *ne plus ultra* of the comedian's art. To this desirable point of perfection, it is, that such celebrated actors have arrived as Garrick, Le Kain, Talma, Kemble, Kean, Young, Demarin, Ekhoﬀ, Iffland,

Mayquez, Siddons, Oldfield, O'Neil, Clairon, Duménil, Pellandi, Marchionni, Duchesnoy, and some few others.

It is by such dumb actions, and those energetic expressions, that we discover a really good actor. One of a middling talent may declaim a speech tolerably well; but it is the sublime artist alone that can paint in the rapid look, all the natural violence of a strong passion. In this respect it is that the Pantomimist always surpasses a comedian or tragedian.

The gestures and countenance of the actor must express to the spectator all that passes in the soul, and minutely point out every variation in its emotions. The heart should feel all that is exhibited by the features and gestures, which cannot act perfectly without its consent.

That accord which exists between our moral and physical faculties must be strictly observed. In real life the most studied dissimulation can never entirely hide the feelings that agitate us. Nor are those feelings in real life ever so strongly expressed as to be glaringly conspicuous. So with the actor, it is very easy for the performer to completely dissimulate the character he represents. But to be natural his action must be more calm, he must try to throw a veil over all his expressions and gestures sufficiently transparent for the spectator to perceive the shades of that secret passion which he endeavours as much as possible to conceal.

The performance of the actor sometimes depends on those who act with him; if they are not animated he necessarily becomes cold. But the principal performer should rather take possession as it were of the

stage, and give a tone to the rest, whose acting should be responsive to his and form a part of it. It is this harmony between the characters of the Pantomime, which contributes most essentially to its general theatrical effect.

It may here be observed, that an actor performing in a small theatre may restrain his gestures and moderate his exertions: but if, on the contrary, the theatre is of extensive dimensions, his pantomimic action must be increased in vigour also and more strongly marked.

On the origin of those masked characters who perform in Italian Comedies.

The following short discourse upon masked characters is taken from Pietro Verri. Supposing it to be a subject not devoid of interest to theatre-goers, treating as it does of the origin of mimics, whom we have already so often mentioned, we have thought ourselves sufficiently authorized in introducing it here.

The custom of performing in masks may be traced to the most remote antiquity. During the brightest ages of Greece no actor appeared on the stage without this peculiar appendage. In ancient comedy, masks were of such universal use that they were adapted to every species of character: there was the miser's mask, the parasite's mask, the mask for the good servant and the mask for the knavish one. An actor therefore had only to make his appearance thus masked, when the nature of his character was immediately recognized, even before a word was spoken: this is

precisely the case with respect to the mask of the modern Harlequin, which is always the same; while those of the Brigella or Clown, the Dottore or Doctor, and the Pantaloon, present so truly their dispositions that it is impossible to be mistaken in the foolishness and stupidity of the Clown, or in the tricks and roguishness of the Harlequin.

We can therefore establish it as a positive fact that the custom of wearing masks, which never varied when once adapted to these peculiar characters, is derived from the ancient Greek and Roman theatres. Amongst the ancient Romans the profession of an actor was divided into two branches, the Mime and the Comedian. The Mime had his face blackened; he appeared upon the stage *fuligine faciem obductus*; at that time the custom of performing in the high dramatic buskin, had not been introduced among the Mimes, the bottom of their feet being bare, and on that account, indeed, they obtained the name of Mimes, according to Diomedes: "*Planipes Græci dicatur Mimus, adeo autem latine planipes quod actores planis pedibus proscaenium introirent.*" We may hence gather how strong a resemblance exists between the modern Harlequin and Clown and the Mimic of antiquity, particularly in those unvarying characteristics, the blackened visage and the buskins. Their general attire, also, bore a great similarity to that of modern times; their Mimes were dressed precisely like our Harlequins: see that passage of Apuleius in which he says: "*Num ex eo argumentare uti me consuevisse tragedi sysmate, Histrionis cocosta, mimi centunclo.*" Where observe, that to mimics was assigned the *Centunculus*, which means a dress of

patches of a hundred colours, that is to say, a Harlequin's suit. And further, it may be remarked, that Vossius, in his *Institutes*, informs us that *Sanniones Mimium agebant rasis capitibus*; in which words two things are worthy of note; first, that Sanniones and Mimes were both in the same line of profession; and secondly, that Harlequin and Clown are now called Zanni, which word is doubtless no other than a corruption of the original term Sannio. Thus then a mimic with his head shaved, his face blackened, and a suit of parti-coloured patches, barefooted or nearly so, and bearing the name of Sannio, according to ancient historians, must have been the worthy ancestor of our magic Harlequin.

Perhaps some may doubt whether the severe Cato and the grave Cicero had witnessed the performance of a Roman Harlequinade, but the doubt will soon be removed upon reading the following passage extracted from his book *De Oratore*, in which it may be seen he describes a Harlequin exactly, "*Quid enim potest tam ridiculum, quem Sannio esse qui ore, vultu, imitandis motibus, voce, denique corpore ridetur ipso.*" From this it must be concluded that the Zanni or Zanseys of modern comedy are derived from the most ancient theatricals, even those of republican Rome, and that they have been thus handed down to us.

It is not at all improbable that good comedy and good tragedy might have been buried and forgotten amid the barbarism that succeeded the fall of Rome, and with which all Italy was overwhelmed, had not the pleasure which unpolished ignorance took in a clowning as gross as that of the *Sanniones*, preserved them from oblivion during the time that

nobler amusement was despised and forgotten. It appears in short, that when the Italian Drama was destroyed, those mimic farces continued to be performed, though it were only in open squares or any corners where such shows could occasionally be represented. Proofs of this may be found as far back as the twelfth century, beyond which period the traces of the existence of the Dottore are not observable. Then it was that Irenerius opened at Bologna a school of jurisprudence, from which such institutions took their rise throughout the greater part of Europe, and so continue to the present time. And it appears that the origin of the mask called Dottore may be fixed at that period, when the two celebrated Doctors, Bulgaro and Martino, disputed upon the question whether the whole world belonged to the reigning emperor as sole proprietor or whether he was only a kind of tenant. Certainly it required some such appearance as this grotesque mask with black nose and scarlet cheek, in order exactly to represent the man who could gravely inquire whether the world belonged to one man, or whether he was only a mere tenant. Some learned persons indeed contend that the original model of this mask was the only good ever bestowed upon posterity by the school of Irenerius.

With respect to the Pantaloon, it seems that it was at the end of the fourteenth, or at the beginning of the fifteenth century, that this mask was introduced at the Theatres; at a period when the commerce of the Venetians caused the sum of 695,000 sequins to circulate annually through the State of Milan, the product of woollen manufactures, which were sent to Venice and again sold in the Levant. This may be

proved by reading a controversy by the Doge Thommaso Mocenigo as related by the historian Sannudo.

Those who would have a more detailed account of the early history of Pantomime, may read Nieuport's *Rituum qui apud Romanos obtinuerunt*; Dubos' *Réflexions sur la Poésie* Vol. 3, and Riccoboni's Treatise.

EXPLANATION OF THE PLATES.

PLATE I.

- Figure 1. First position, arms in the second.
2. Position of the wrist and fingers.
3. Opposition, *épaulement du corps* ; half arm in opposition, and legs in third position.
4. Arms extended in opposition ; legs in the fifth position.
5. Arms encircling over the head, and legs in the fifth position on the toes.

PLATE II.

- Figure 1. Position of the body, *demi-bras*, and legs in the fourth position (side view).
2. Second position, feet flat on the ground, and position of the *demi-bras*.
3. Second position on the toes.
4. Bending in the second position.
5. Manner in which a dancer should hold herself when practising.

PLATE III.

- Figures 1, 2, 3. Defective positions of the arms.
4. Physical defects in the construction of the bow-legged dancer.
5. Physical defects in the construction of the close-legged dancer.

PLATE IV.

- Figure 1. Fourth position forwards in the air. Arms in the second position : (side view.)
2. Same position on the toes : arms in opposition (front view).
 3. Fourth position, leg in the air behind, (side view.)
 - 4 *Poses*, preparation, and termination of *temps* and steps.

PLATE V.

- Figures 1, 2, 3, 4. *Poses*, preparation and termination of *temps* and steps.
5. Pose of the hand and arms in certain positions.

PLATE VI.

- Figure 1. Second position in the air and on the toes.
- 2, 3, 4. Different attitudes derived from the second and fourth positions.

PLATE VII.

- Figures 1 & 2. Different attitudes derived from the fourth position.
3. Position of the dancer in beginning a Pirouette from the outside.
 4. Position of the dancer in beginning a Pirouette from the inside. Arabesque on the two feet.

PLATE VIII.

- Figure 1. Attitude.
2. Attitude seen sideways.
 - 3 & 4. Different ways of placing oneself in attitude.

PLATE IX.

- Figure 1. The Mercury of J. Bologne.
 2 & 3. Derivatives from that attitude.
 4. Position of a Pirouette on the instep.

PLATE X.

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4. Arabesques.

PLATE XI.

- Figures 1 & 2. Arabesques.
 3 & 4. Arabesques behind.

PLATE XII.

- Figures 1, 2, & 3. Arabesques.
 4. Position of the dancer in movements of elevation and in *entrechats*.
 5. Elevation of two feet in height.

PLATE XIII.

- Figures 1, 2, 3, & 4. Attitudes of a dancer in steps of elevation and *entrechats*.

PLATE XIV.

- Figures 1, 2, 3. Poses of dancers of either sex for the three different kinds of dancing.
 1. Serious or heroic dancer.
 2. *Demi-caractère*.
 3. Comic dancers.
 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. *Attitudes de genre*; groups, modifications, *épaulement* of attitudes in groups, costumes the most suitable to dancers.
 1. Greek Tunic.
 2. Spanish Troubadour,
 3. Villagers.
 Principal group of a Baccahanalia, composed by the author.

THE reader will notice that a few of these figures are obviously exaggerated in order to give emphasis to the position or attitude to be aimed at by the Dancer.

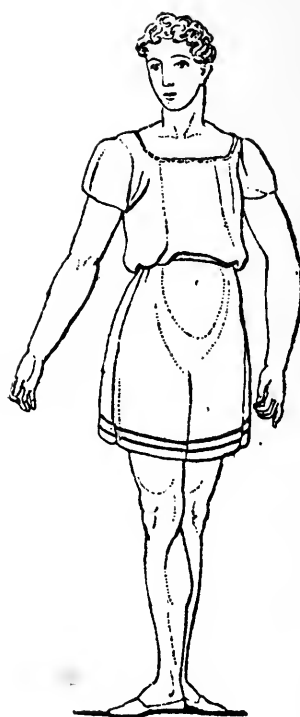
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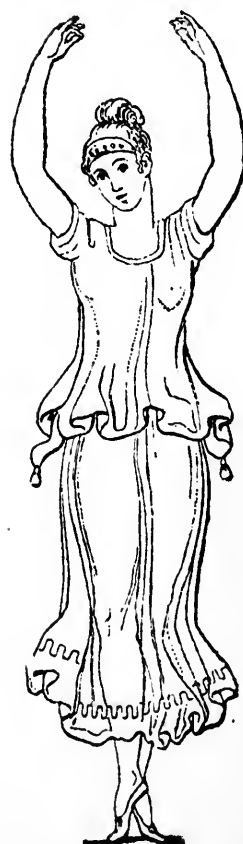
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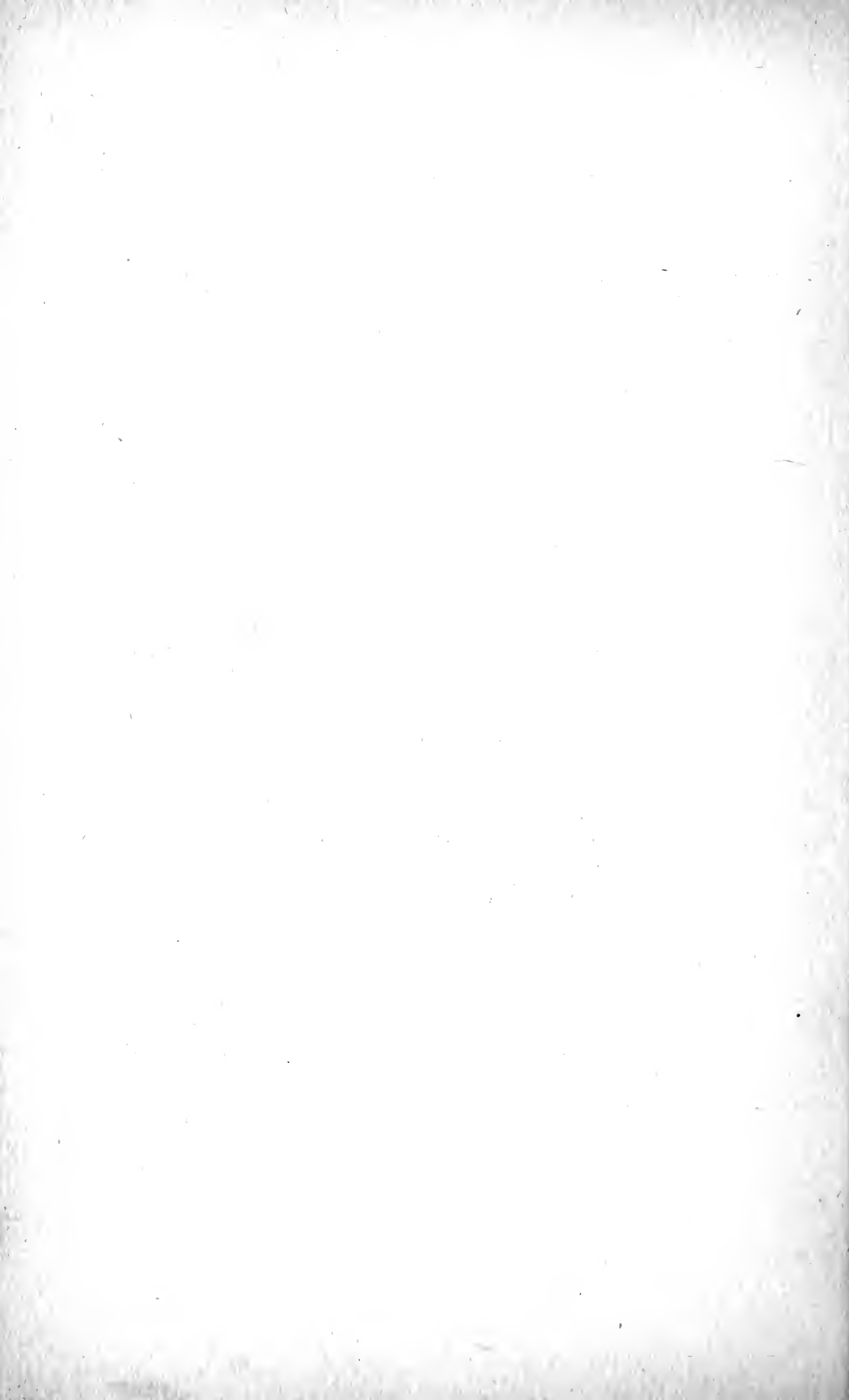
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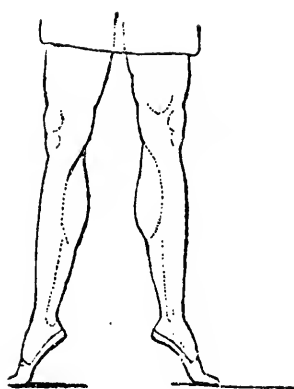


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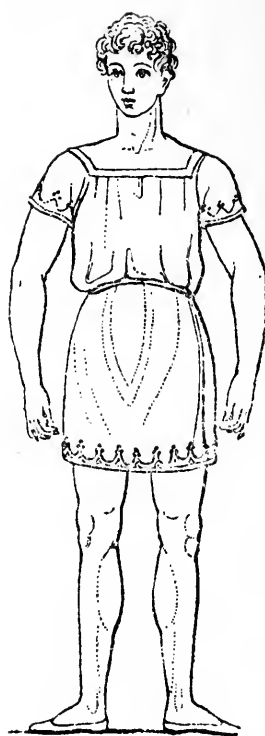




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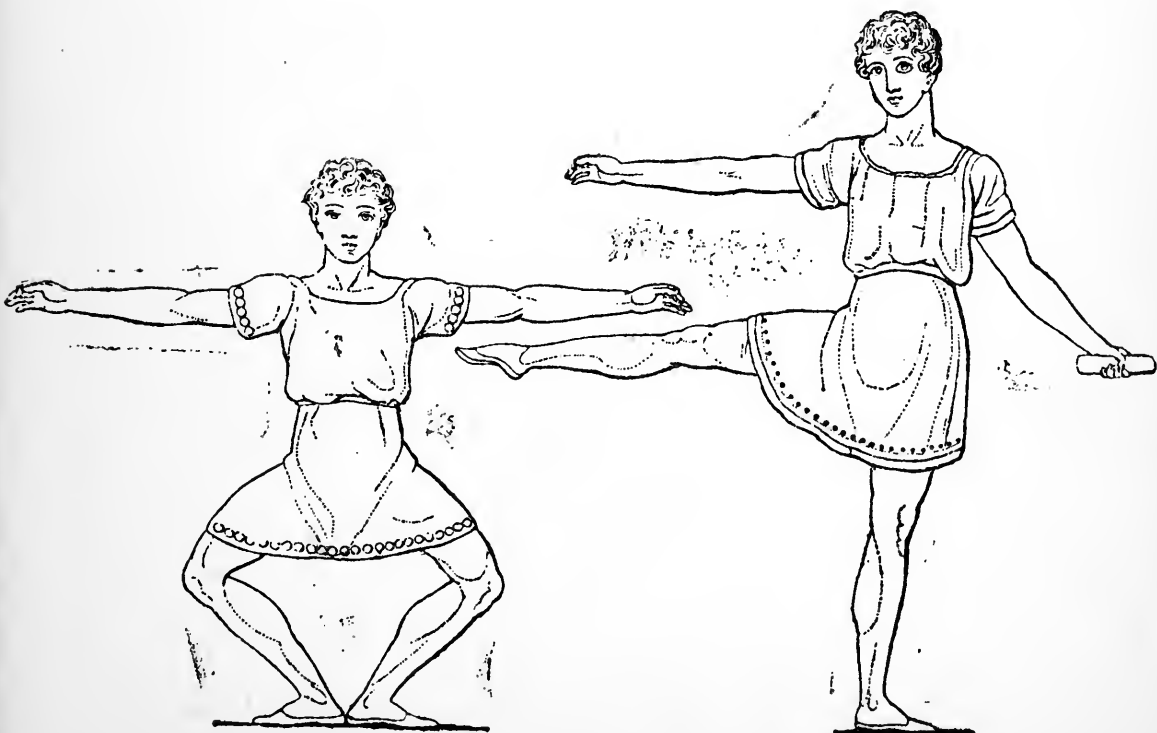


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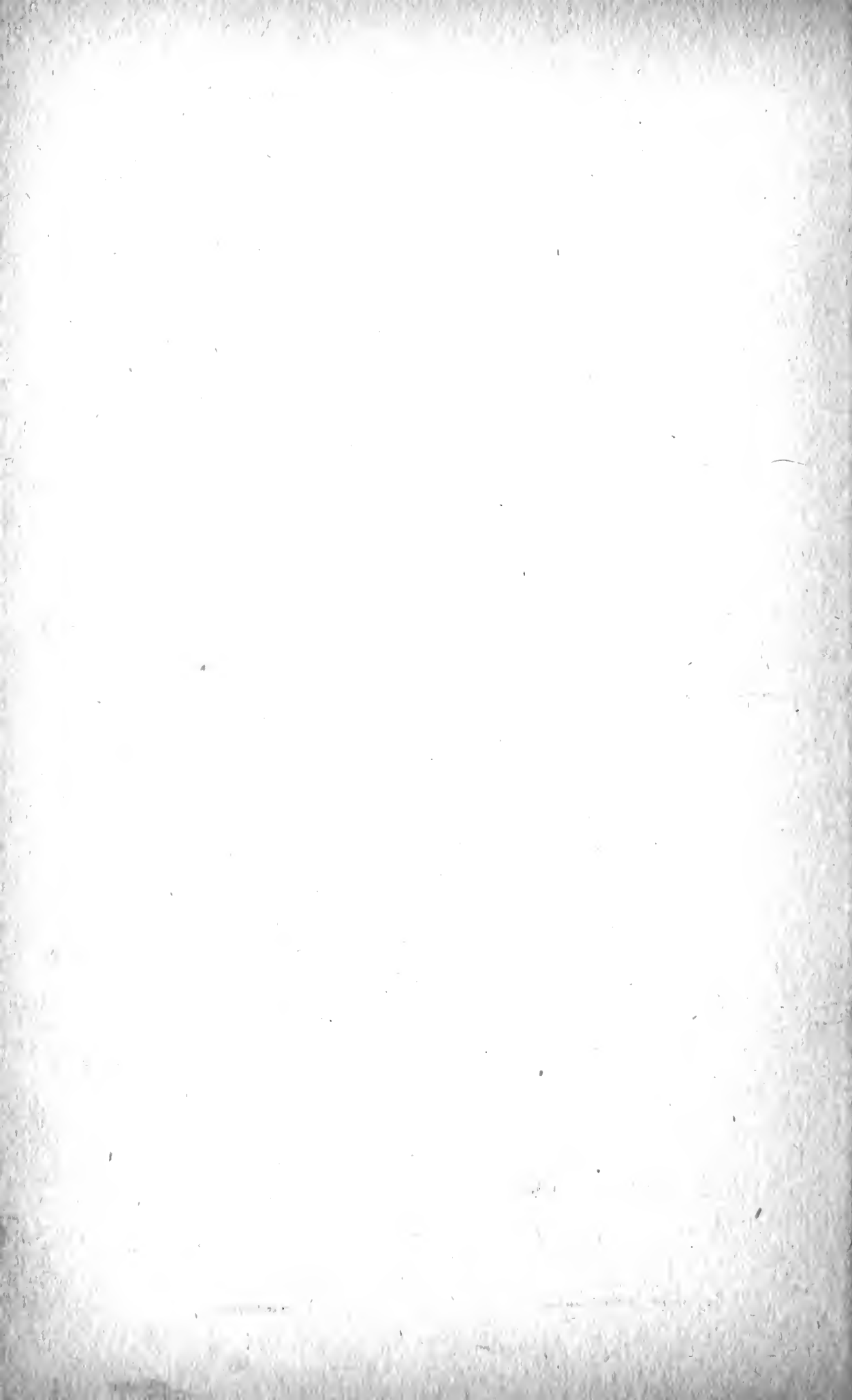
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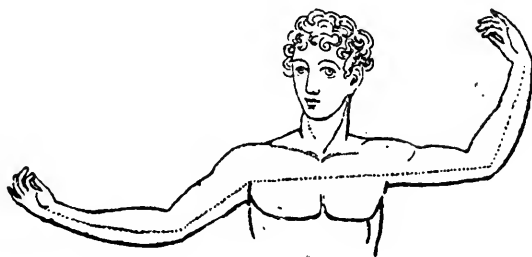
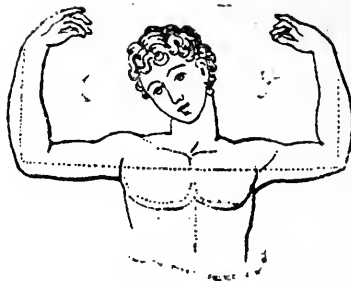
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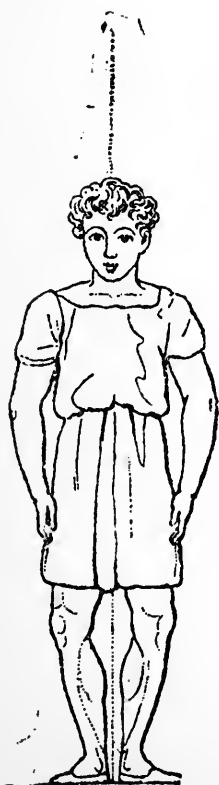
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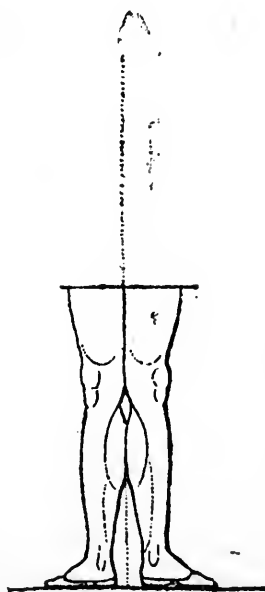
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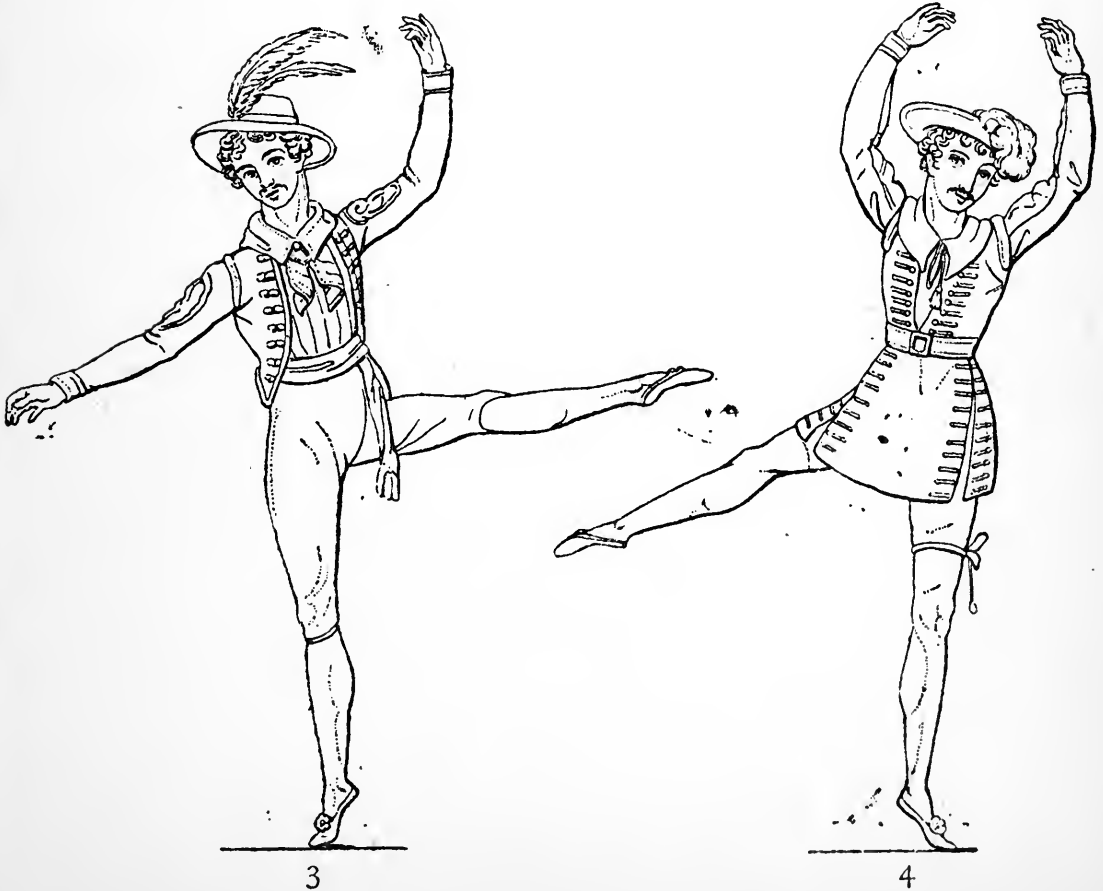
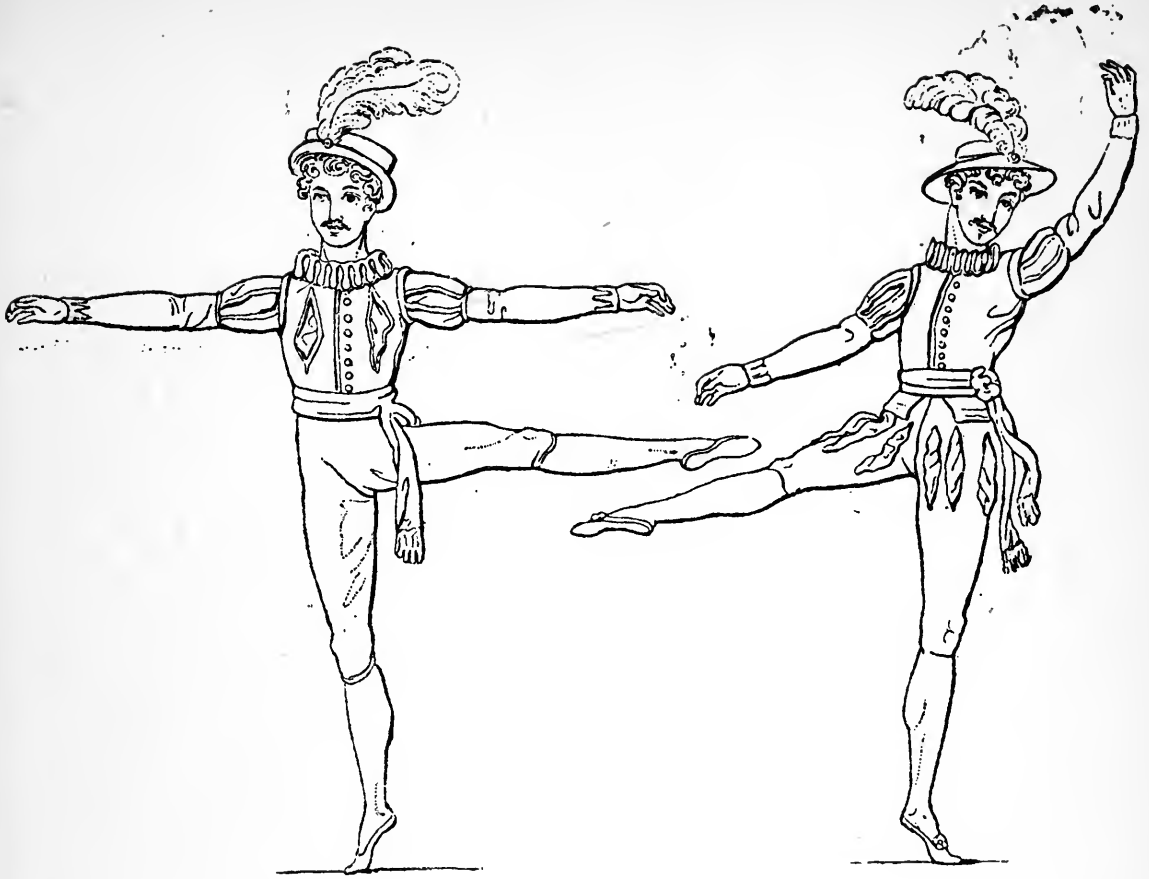


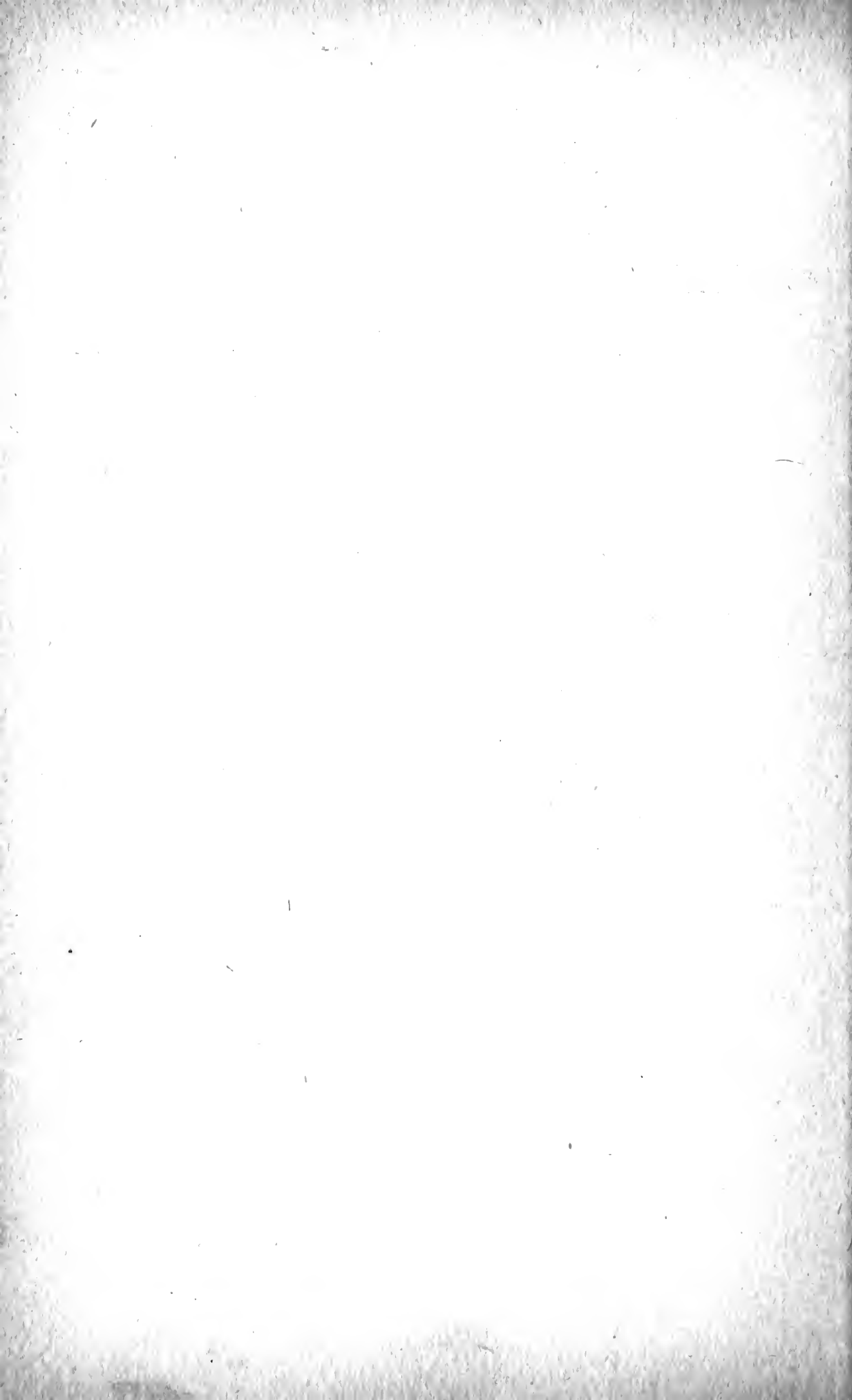
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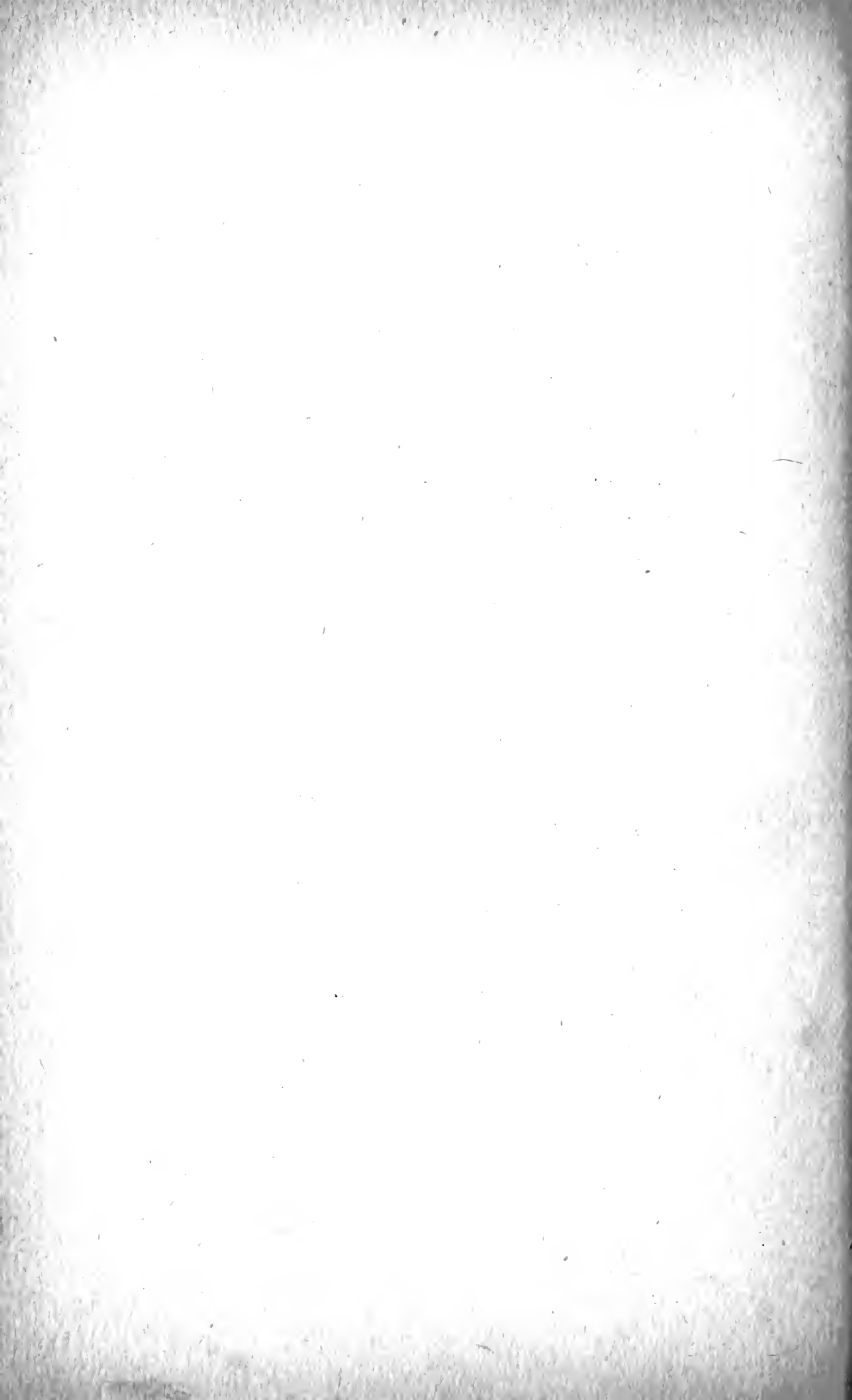
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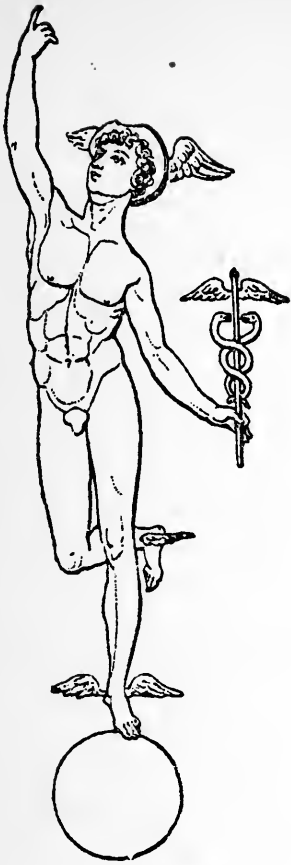


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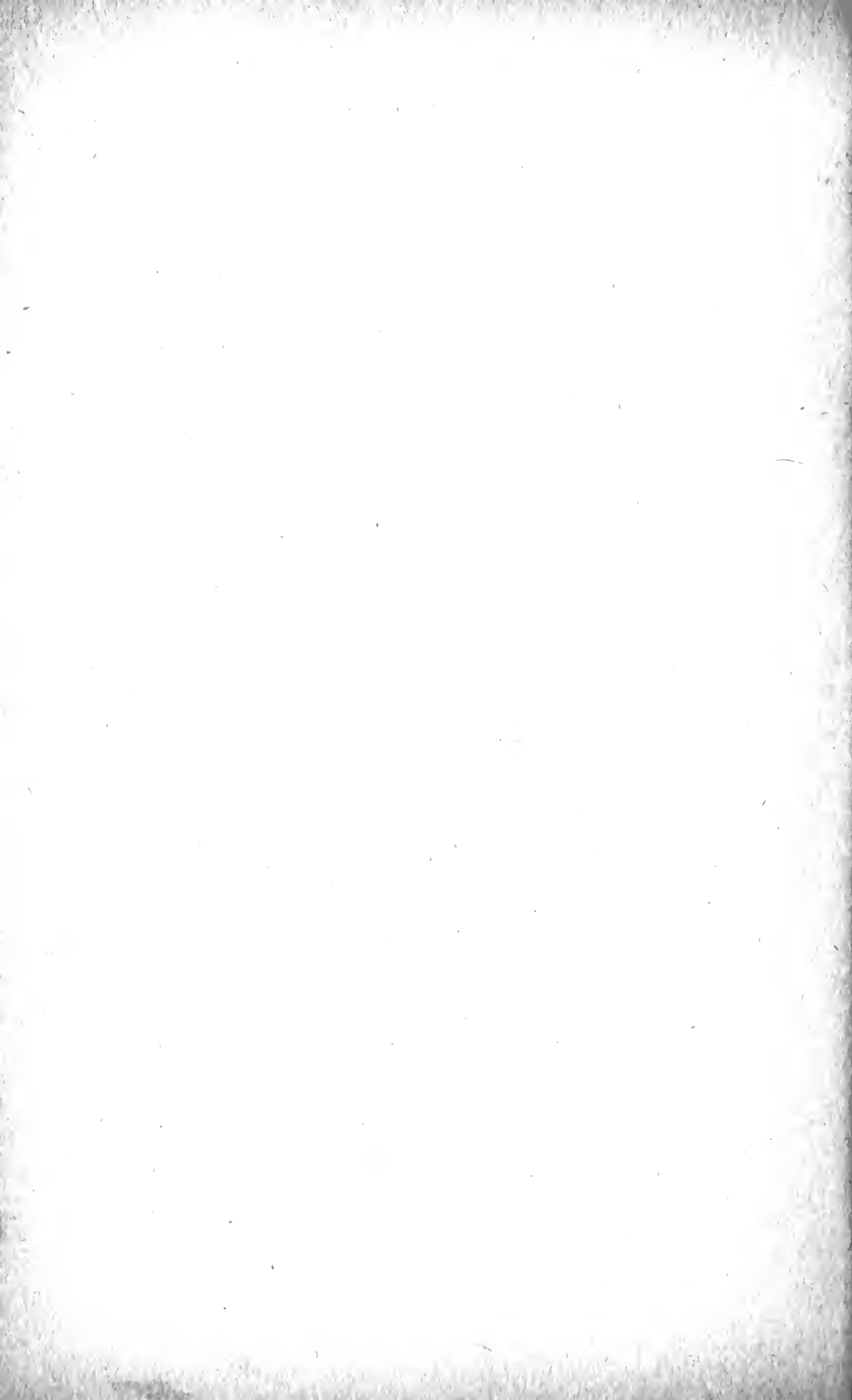
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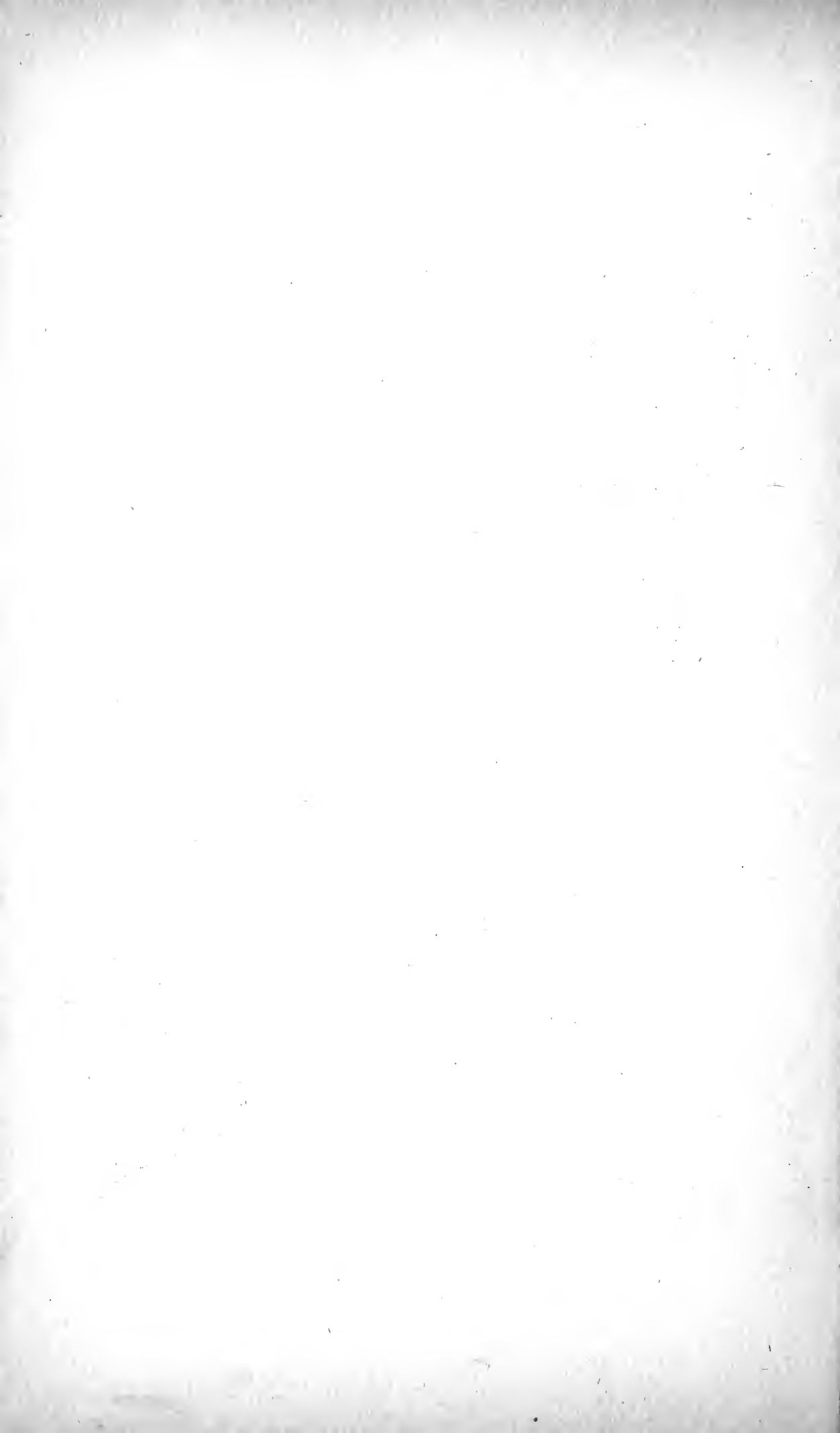
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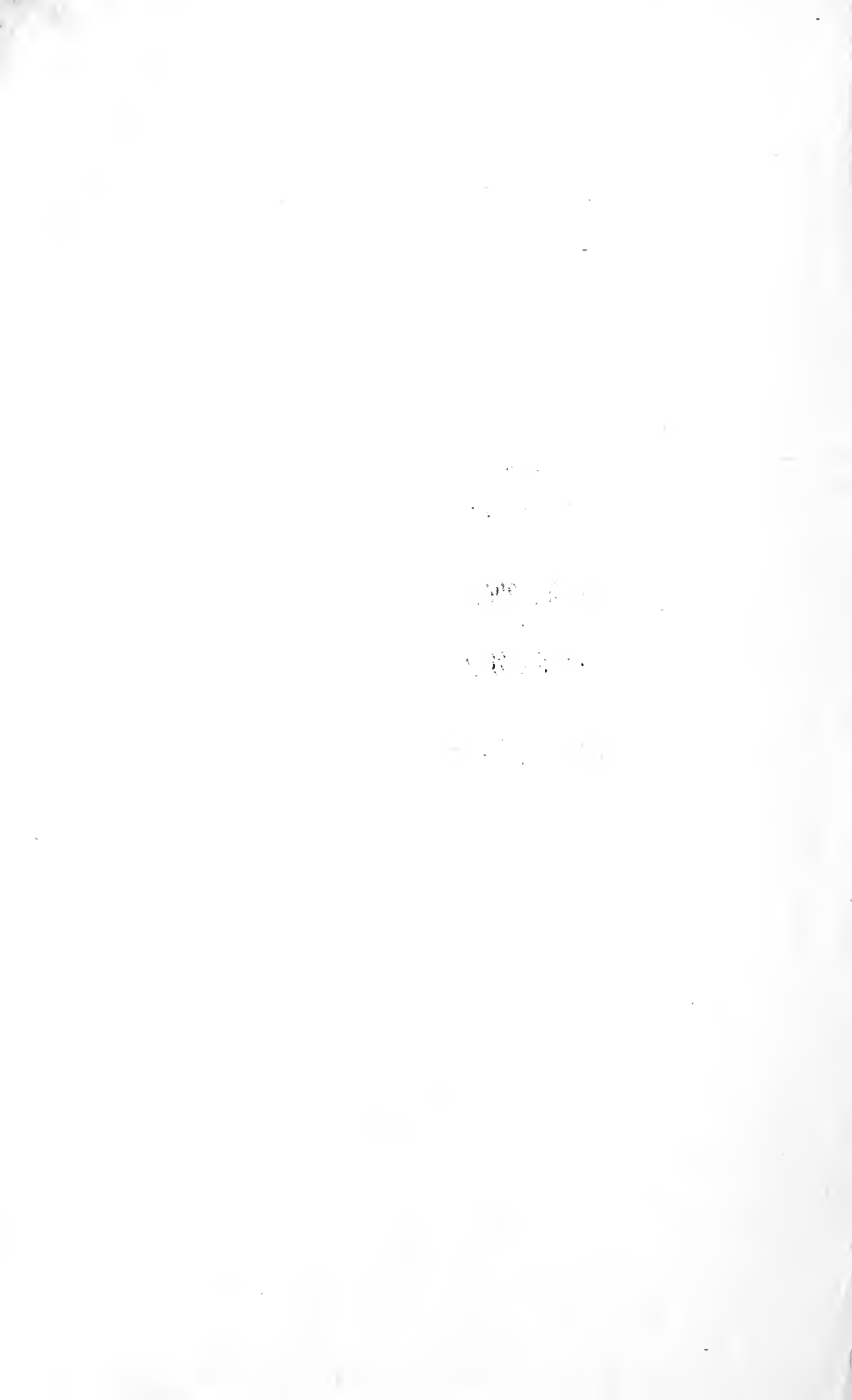


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